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ENGLISH LITERATURE, HISTORY AND ALLIED SUBJECTS.

III.—GENERAL HULL'S INVASION OF CANADA IN 1812.

By

LIEUT-COLONEL E. CRUIKSHANK.

OTTAWA

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III.—*General Hull's Invasion of Canada in 1812.*

By LIEUT-COLONEL E. CRUIKSHANK.

For a good many months previous to the declaration of war, the Government of the United States had been collecting information and considering the best routes for the invasion of Canada. Among those confidentially consulted on this subject by Dr. Eustis, the Secretary of War, was General John Armstrong, formerly an United States Senator, and lately American Minister in Paris, who was regarded as a high authority on military affairs. In his reply, which was dated 2nd January, 1812,¹ Armstrong advised the immediate purchase of an abundant supply of military stores, the abandonment of all outlying posts of lesser importance upon the Indian Frontier, and the withdrawal of their garrisons, the acquisition of naval ascendancy on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, and the immediate increase of the regular army to a strength sufficient for the defence of their own frontier and the successful invasion of the British Provinces.

He further recommended the concentration of a force of six battalions of mounted riflemen from the Western States at Detroit, where it would be "within striking distance of Indian villages or British settlements," but remarked at the same time that this position would be "positively bad," unless a naval supremacy was secured upon Lake Erie. The occupation of Montreal by an invading army, he argued with great force, must necessarily be followed by the conquest of the whole of Upper Canada, as that place entirely commanded the navigation of both the St. Lawrence and Ottawa. With this object, the whole disposable field force ought to be concentrated near Albany, and its movement veiled by demonstrations with "masses of militia" on the Niagara River, at Sackett's Harbour, and in Vermont on the line of the Sorel.

This promising plan of operations was approved by the Cabinet and measures were begun to carry it into effect. The design to evacuate Mackinac and Chicago, and possibly other military posts in the Indian country, became public, and soon provoked loud protests from the inhabitants of the frontier, who regarded the retention of these garrisons as essential to their own security.

About this time, William Hull, Governor of the Michigan Territory, was summoned to Washington by the Secretary of War, for consultation. His reputation for personal courage and sound judgment stood deserv-

¹ Notices of the War of 1812, by John Armstrong, New York, 1840, Vol. 1, pp. 234-41, Appendix No. 22.

edly high. During the War of the Revolution he had distinguished himself on several occasions, particularly in the action at Stillwater, on 19th September, 1777, when about half of his command were either killed or wounded. He had also been present at the storming of Stony Point, but the military exploit by which he had acquired most fame, was a well planned and successful attack upon a Loyalist outpost at Morrisania, in January, 1781. Three years later he was appointed by Washington a special commissioner to proceed to Quebec to request the surrender of the western posts. He had acted as third in command of the force employed in the suppression of Shay's Rebellion, and in 1793 had been selected as commissioner to request the assistance of Lieut.-Governor Simcoe in the negotiations with the western Indians, and had performed this rather embarrassing mission with much tact and discretion.

After serving for eight years as a State Senator in the Legislature of Massachusetts, he had been appointed Governor and Indian Agent for the Territory of Michigan in 1805, by President Jefferson. He had performed his duties so well that he had been reappointed in 1808, and again in 1811.¹ No other person in the United States possessed such a wide and intimate knowledge of the affairs of the territory he had so long governed, and of that portion of Upper Canada adjacent to it. His relations with the Indians of the Northwest had been close and friendly, and his correspondents and subordinate agents had kept him well informed with respect to the more distant bands. On two previous occasions he had prepared well considered memorials on the military situation on that frontier and his opinion naturally carried great weight.

In both of these he had strongly advocated the establishment of a sufficient naval force upon Lake Erie to control the upper lakes and maintain the communication between the military posts upon them. In the latter, dated 15th June, 1811, but written under the conviction that war with Great Britain was probable, he had endeavoured to forecast the conduct of the Indians in that event.

"Their situation and habits are such that little dependence can be placed on them. At present they appear to be friendly, and was I to calculate on the professions of their chiefs, I should be satisfied that they would not become hostile. Their first passion, however, is war. The policy of the British Government is to consider them their allies, and, in the event of war, to invite them to join their standard. The policy of the American Government has been to advise them in the event

¹ Campbell, *Revolutionary Services and Civil Life of General William Hull*.

of war to remain quiet in their villages and take no part in the quarrels in which they have no interest. Many of their old sachems and chiefs would advise this line of conduct. Their authority, however, over the warriors would not restrain them. They would not listen to their advice. An Indian is hardly considered a man until he has been engaged in war and can show trophies. This first and most ardent of their passions will be excited by presents most gratifying to their pride and vanity. Unless strong measures are taken to prevent it, we may consider beyond all doubt they will be influenced to follow the advice of their British fathers.¹

He was well aware of the great discontent existing among them owing to encroachments upon their lands, and knew that the Shawnee Prophet and his brother, Tecumseh, had long been actively engaged in the scheme of forming a general confederacy of the Indians of the Northwest, with the avowed object of driving all the white settlers beyond the Ohio River, the boundary named in the royal proclamation of 1764. Detroit, he declared, was "the key of the northern country," and as long as it was held by the United States the Indians would be kept in check. Its regular garrison at that time consisted of a single company of artillery and another of infantry, numbering in all less than one hundred men. By his advice, officers of a volunteer company were appointed, with authority to recruit in the vicinity, and four companies of militia were called into service, while at the same time the commanding officer was directed to construct batteries on the bank of the river for the protection of the town.

Orders were given to rebuild the brig *Adams*, the only vessel of war possessed by the United States on the Upper Lakes. Hull strongly opposed Armstrong's project of directing the main attack against Montreal unless a sufficient force for the protection of Michigan should be previously assembled at Detroit, which would also cut off all communication between the British and the Indians of the United States and probably prevent a general rising of those tribes. "The British cannot hold Upper Canada," he added, "and that assistance they cannot obtain if we have an adequate force in the situation I have pointed out." They might even be induced to abandon Upper Canada by its appearance alone and command of the lakes would thus be secured without the expense of building ships, although he again strongly recommended that this should be done.²

¹ J. F. Clark, *Campaign of 1812*, pp. 414-16; Hull *Memoirs*, pp. 19-20.

² Hull, to the Secretary of War, 6th March, 1812, in "Defence of Gen. Hull, written by himself," Boston, 1814; also in Canadian Archives, incomplete draft.

His views were warmly supported by the Governors of the State of Ohio and the Territories of Indiana and Illinois as being most essential for their protection, and within a few days an order was despatched to Governor Meigs of Ohio, requiring him to detach twelve hundred militia for service at Detroit. The 4th Regiment of United States Infantry, which since the engagement with the Indians at Tippecanoe had been stationed at Vincennes, was directed to join these troops and advance with them to their destination. With three companies of the First United States Artillery, two detachments of the First Regiment of the United States Infantry, a company of rangers and the Michigan militia, it was anticipated that a force would be assembled that would be "competent to the defence of the northwestern frontier against Indian hostility, and which in the event of a rupture with Great Britain would enable the United States to obtain the command of Lake Erie, and with it the means of more easily co-operating with such other corps as might be destined to the invasion of the Canadas."¹ Two companies of Ohio militia were at the same time ordered to Sandusky, and several companies of newly enlisted rangers to the frontier of Indiana and Illinois. A considerable supply of arms and military stores was forwarded to Meigs for the equipment of his militia, and Col. Jacob Kingsbury of the First United States Infantry, detachments of whose regiment were already stationed in Michigan, was selected for the command at Detroit. He fell seriously ill, and the Secretary of War lost no time in soliciting Hull to accept it with the rank of brigadier general in the regular army. He was unwilling to assume the increased responsibility of what he felt must be a very difficult task, mainly in consequence of his age and long dissociation from military affairs.² He had just completed his fifty-eighth year, and his white hair made him look somewhat older, but he was still hale and strong. In manner he was sedate and dignified, and at the time it seemed scarcely possible that a better choice could have been made. His objections were finally overcome, and on April 8th he was commissioned a brigadier-general. Leaving Washington a few days later he began his tedious return journey to Detroit by way of Pittsburg and Cincinnati,

No great apprehension was then felt of any immediate hostility on the part of the Indians. To all appearance the confederacy on the Wabash, lately so formidable, had nearly dissolved. In January, Little Turtle, a leading Chief of the Wyandots of Sandusky, assured Governor

¹ President Madison's Message to Congress, Nov. 4th, 1812; Secretary of War to Committee of Senate, June 6th, 1812.

² Drake—Life of Tecumseh.

Harrison that the Shawnee Prophet had been deserted by all his followers except two lodges of his own tribe, and that Tecumseh had lately returned from the south accompanied by only eight warriors. He affirmed that the Miami and Eel River Indians would remain faithful to the United States, while at the same time the Delawares made professions of inalterable friendship.¹ Harrison had so little doubt that the local militia would be able to protect the inhabitants, that he readily assented to the removal of the troops from Vincennes to Detroit, but remarked that, "the implicit obedience and respect which Tecumseh's followers pay him is truly wonderful, although he has been in almost continual motion for the past four years."

Hull reported to the Secretary of War (March 4th, 1812) that the Indians had delivered up their arms without hesitation. "I do believe they are sincere in their professions of friendship and a desire for peace," he continued, "and that we shall have no further hostilities except it be from the Winnebagoes, who are so far removed as to consider themselves out of reach. Tecumseh has returned and is very much exasperated against his brother for his precipitancy, and blames him for throwing off the mask before their plans were matured."

The people of Ohio and Kentucky in general were eager for war, and sanguine of their ability to conquer Upper Canada with their militia alone if they were given an opportunity.

On the 6th day of April, Governor Meigs published a general order directing twelve hundred militia to assemble at Dayton on the Great Miami River, on the last day of that month, and three additional companies of fifty men each to be posted at Cleveland and Upper and Lower Sandusky. The force intended for the expedition to Detroit was divided into three regiments, one being recruited from Cincinnati and the valley of the Great Miami, another from the valley of the Scioto, and the third in the valley of the Muskingum. Besides these, the enlistment of a troop of dragoons in Cincinnati was also authorized. Young men of the best type were everywhere anxious to enlist and all these corps were soon completed beyond their established strength. Early in May, more than sixteen hundred enthusiastic volunteers assembled at Dayton. Duncan McArthur, a Major-General commanding a division of the Ohio militia, was elected Colonel, and Brigadier-General James Denny, and William Trimble, afterwards an United States Senator, were elected Majors of the First Regiment.¹ McArthur, who was then about forty years of age, had served as a volunteer under Harmar and Wayne, by whom he had been employed as a spy or scout.

¹ McDonald, *Life of McArthur*.

Subsequently, he became a surveyor, and acquired wealth through lucky speculations in land near Chillicothe. He had already been a member of the Legislature and was elected Governor of Ohio in 1830. An English traveller, who saw him a few years after the war, describes him as "dirty, and butcher-like, very unlike a soldier in appearance, seeming half-savage and dressed like a backwoodsman; generally considered as being only fit for hard knocks and Indian warfare."¹ He was, however, brave, energetic, and undeniably popular. James Findlay, a Congressman, was elected Colonel of the Second Regiment, and Lewis Cass, United States Marshal for Ohio, an ambitious lawyer, living at Marietta, was elected Colonel of the Third. The subordinate officers were mostly men of considerable prominence and influence. The rank and file were confident and boastful and, above all, blind to their own deficiencies. Regarding themselves as the flower of the population of their state, they anticipated that the conquest of Upper Canada would be a mere holiday campaign, and were inclined to be noisy, unruly, and insubordinate when anything went wrong or displeased them. A veteran frontiersman, specially qualified for the duty, was assigned to each regiment as chief interpreter and scoutmaster. These were Isaac Zane, whose name is perpetuated in an Ohio town, for many years a prisoner among the Indians and familiar with their dialects; James McPherson, who had served his apprenticeship in the British Indian Department under Colonel McKee, but since 1795 had acted as Agent of the United States in charge of the Shawnees and Senecas of Ohio; and James Armstrong, who had also lived among them for a long time and had been adopted into one of these tribes.²

Meigs assumed the command until Hull arrived, and made all necessary arrangements for organization and discipline. He at once guaranteed pay and subsistence for all men in excess of the authorized strength, but found considerable difficulty in providing them with arms and equipment.

The entire force was uniformed with homespun linen hunting-shirts and trousers, with leather belts and low-crowned felt hats.

Two companies in each regiment were armed with rifles, the remainder with muskets, and all of them, besides bayonets, carried tomahawks and hunting knives, which were formidable weapons at close quarters.

While they were encamped here, rumours of Indian depredations created so much alarm that most of the settlers on the Indian frontier

¹ Faux, *Memorable days in America*, p. 184.

² Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio*; McDonald, *Life of Duncan McArthur*.

deserted their homes in a sudden panic and began to build blockhouses for protection. On May 23rd Hull arrived, having with him forty recruits for the First United States Infantry at Detroit, and reviewed the troops in company with Governor Meigs, who formally transferred the command in a short speech, in which he congratulated them at their good fortune in being led by such an able and experienced soldier, and announced that a second army would at once be organized in Kentucky to follow and support them. Hull replied in a high-flown and inflammatory address, which must have sounded strangely like an echo of some recent speeches in Congress.

“On marching through a wilderness memorable for savage barbarity,” he said, “you will remember the causes by which that barbarity has been heretofore excited. In viewing the ground stained by the blood of your fellow citizens, it will be impossible to suppress the feelings of indignation. Passing by the ruins of a fortress erected in our territory by a foreign nation in times of profound peace, and for the express purpose of exciting the savages to hostility, and supplying them with the means of conducting a barbarous war, must remind you of that system of oppression and injustice which that nation has continually practised, and which the spirit of an indignant people can no longer endure.”¹

Before beginning his march, he determined to despatch a confidential agent to the principal Indian villages along the route with messages announcing his movement through their territory with a strong force. For this mission, Governor Meigs had selected Brigadier-General Robert Lucas, who was entrusted with despatches to the Indian agents and an address to be delivered to the chiefs and warriors of the Wyandots, Delawares, Miamis, Ottawas, Pottawatomies, Chippawas, and Shawnees in Ohio and Michigan. He was instructed to tell them that General Hull, advancing with a numerous army, came with an olive branch in one hand and a sword in the other, and that “those of them that accepted the one should enjoy protection, peace and happiness, and those that preferred the other should experience all the punishment his powerful hand could inflict,” and that if any acts of hostility were committed by them, they would forfeit their lands, their annuities, and possibly their lives.² On his arrival at Upper Sandusky he assembled the Wyandots and delivered his speech, to which they replied in a friendly

¹ McAfee, *History of the War in the Western Country*, p. 51; Brown, *Northwestern Campaign*.

² Lucas to James Foster, Nov. 4th, 1812. Printed in *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, July, 1906.

manner. Both whites and Indians, however, seemed greatly disquieted by alarming rumours.

Proceeding to Lower Sandusky, he learned that the Ottawas and Miamis had gone off in the direction of Detroit, but held a council with the Wyandots and Munceys. The former replied in a satisfactory manner, but the latter said nothing and moved away the same night. At the Miami and River Raisin he found detachments of the Michigan militia under arms, in apprehension of an attack from the Indians, and a similar state of affairs existing at Detroit, several of the officers and principal residents having already removed or sent off their families.¹ Mr. Atwater, the acting Governor, convened councils of the Indians, which were attended by representatives of all tribes except the Munceys, although the Ottawas seemed indifferent. On one of these occasions, Walk-in-the-Water, who spoke for the Wyandots of Brownstown, read a speech protesting against the interference of the American officials who had attempted to prevent their young men from crossing the river to Amherstburg, and asserting that the collision that occurred on the Wabash the year before had been entirely the fault of the white people, ending with a bold declaration that the Indians were their own masters and would go where they pleased. Atwater made a sharp retort, accusing him of having lately transmitted a message from Colonel Elliott to the Indians on the Wabash, adding that if he respected Elliott more than him, he ought to go to him, as he could not be friends with both. Walk-in-the-Water then announced that, having learned that some of the Shawnees living on the Miami and Scioto Rivers had been engaged as scouts for Hull's army, he had despatched some of his young men to watch their movements, and left the council apparently in ill humour. Lucas noted in his journal at this time that the Indians were in confusion and at a loss how to act, but that only fear would restrain them from joining the British. The inhabitants of Michigan were described by him as being chiefly "ignorant French Canadians, attached to no particular political principle, apparently more of the disposition of Indians than white people." Two militia officers had recently been dismissed for advising their men to avoid the draft by removing to Canada, and there was so much disaffection among them that little assistance could be expected from the militia. On the 14th of June he witnessed the arrival of the *Queen Charlotte* at Amherstburg, and learned that General Brock was on board with a reinforcement of one hundred regulars for the garrison. While returning to rejoin Hull, he encountered two large parties of Ottawas and Wyandots on their

¹ Sibley to Worthington, 26th February, 1812.

way to Brownstown or Amherstburg, and on passing through their villages, found them quite deserted.¹ Hull had at first intended to descend the Au Glaize and Miami of the Lake in boats, by which he might reasonably expect to reach Detroit in about two weeks. Governor Meigs accompanied him to Urbana, where the principal chiefs and warriors of the Ohio Indians had been summoned to a general council with the intention of overawing them by a display of military force. This council was not largely attended, but the chiefs present readily consented to sanction General Hull's march through their territory, and to permit him to build a chain of blockhouses along his route. Several warriors agreed to accompany him in the capacity of guides and scouts. While encamped at this place on June 3rd, he was joined by the 4th United States Infantry, about 500 strong, which had come from Vincennes by way of Louisville and Cincinnati. Everywhere along their route they had been warmly welcomed as "the heroes of Tippecanoe," and marched into camp through a triumphal arch of evergreen boughs inscribed with the words, "Tippecanoe—Glory."²

His force now exceeded 2,100 of all ranks. The project of proceeding by water was abandoned as impracticable at that season of the year and it was decided to advance by land.³ This involved much delay and the labour of constructing more than a hundred miles of road passable not only for infantry and cavalry, but also for a train of pack horses and heavy waggons. Ten days were consumed in preparations for the march, and it was not until the 13th that McArthur's regiment was sent forward to clear the way, and build blockhouses twenty miles apart. Two days later the main body followed. Heavy rains had fallen and the road soon became a morass in which the waggons stuck fast until lifted out by main strength. On the second day's march, the advance guard was overtaken at the crossing of the Scioto River, where a large blockhouse was built and named Fort McArthur.

Here the main body halted for three days, while the advance guard was engaged in cutting the road through a dense tract of forest known as the Black Swamp, on the watershed between the head waters of streams falling into the Ohio and those flowing into Lake Erie. The rate of progress did not exceed four or five miles a day, as a large part of the road had to be corduroyed with logs to make it passable and many bridges built. Even then, when the march was resumed, it was

¹ Lucas Journal, and letter to Foster, 4th November, 1812.

² Lossing Field Book, p. 256. Walker's Journal, McAfee.

³ Cass to —, June 8th, 1812; National Intelligencer, July 14th, 1812.

found necessary to lighten the waggons by placing part of their contents on pack horses, and the infantry had to wade to the knees in many places, while they suffered greatly from innumerable swarms of flies and mosquitoes.¹ Torrents of rain fell daily and the surrounding country was flooded in every direction. Following the example of General Wayne in his campaign of 1794, the encampment was surrounded every night by a breastwork of felled trees as a precaution against surprise. On arriving at the height of land it was found to be impossible to proceed further until the floods subsided, and a post was established which received the significant name of Fort Necessity. Here General Lucas rejoined the army, bringing on the whole an encouraging report as to the disposition of the Indians he had visited, and a number of chiefs and warriors from the neighbouring villages came in and were treated partly as guides and partly as hostages. Some of these may have been spies employed by Tecumseh and Walk-in-the-Water, who duly reported the progress of the expedition. The Shawnees and others who acknowledged the leadership of the Prophet, were eager to attack it while entangled in these swamps, but were dissuaded by British agents in pursuance of their instructions to maintain peace as long as possible.² From this place Hull wrote his first despatch to the Secretary of War since leaving Urbana. It was dated on the 24th of June, and related that "heavy and incessant rains had rendered it impossible to make that progress which the state of things may require and my own wishes strongly impel." Officers and men were in good health and "animated by a laudable spirit." After referring to Brock's arrival at Amherstburg and the report that large numbers of Indians were assembling at that place and Brownstown, he remarked, "in the event of hostilities I feel a confidence that the force under my command will be superior to any which can be opposed to it; it now exceeds two thousand rank and file."³ To Major Witherell, of the Michigan Legion, he wrote hopefully at the same time that he would soon reach Detroit with 2,200 men. Two days march brought him to the head of boat navigation on Blanchard's Fork, a branch of the Miami, where McArthur had built a stockade which he named Fort Findlay. Ten days had thus been occupied in advancing only twenty-seven miles, but it was anticipated that the road built from Fort McArthur would greatly facilitate the conveyance of supplies in future. At Fort Findlay, on

¹ Brown, N. W. Campaign, 9; Walker's Journal, pp. 46-8; Magazine of Western History, October, 1885.

² Captain J. B. Glegg to Sir George Prevost, 11th Nov., 1812, Can. Archives; Hull to Eustis, 24th June, 1812, Can. Archives, C. 675, p. 162.

³ Hull to Eustis, Can. Archives, C 676, p. 165.

June 26th, Hull received, by a special messenger from Chillicothe, a despatch from the Secretary of War, written apparently on the 18th of June, before the act declaring war had become law, urging him to advance with all possible haste. The Indians were at once set to work building canoes, and readily undertook to convey part of the baggage to the foot of the rapids of the Miami. A return of his force next morning showed a total of 2,075.¹ It is doubtful whether the officers and the recruits of the 1st Infantry were included in this return, and it is certain that the teamsters and Indians were not. Hull moved forward with such increased speed that in three days he advanced thirty-six miles, to the head of the rapids on the Miami, where the Infantry crossed over in boats and the waggons and horsemen forded the river. On the last day of June he marched down the left bank of the Miami to the foot of the rapids, where there was a small village, and encamped near the site of Fort Miami. The horses of the supply train began to show great signs of exhaustion, and finding a small schooner, the *Cuyahoga Packet*, lying in the river here, she was engaged to relieve them by conveying the officers' baggage and surplus stores and a number of sick men with a small escort to Detroit. By singular negligence on the part of the General's son, Capt. A. F. Hull, of the 9th United States Infantry, who was acting as his aide-de-camp, a trunk containing much of his official correspondence and other papers of importance was also placed on board.² Before moving out of camp next morning, a messenger from Cleveland arrived with a letter from the Secretary of War, also dated on the 18th of June, which had been sent by that route in order to reach him with the least delay. It announced that war had been declared, and instructed him to be on his guard and hasten forward to Detroit, make arrangements for the defence of the country, and wait for further orders. A party of dragoons was sent off at once to overtake the *Cuyahoga Packet* before she entered the lake, but she was already beyond recall. Upon such apparently trifling circumstances does the fate of a campaign sometimes depend.

¹ 4th Regiment of Infantry	483
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2,075

H. A. S. Dearborn—Defence of Gen. Dearborn, p. 10.

² Walker's Journal, p. 48; Lucas, Journal, pp. 366-7; Hull, Memoirs; Clarke, Life of Hull.

Hull was still seventy miles from Detroit, but as the road was tolerably good, he was able to advance by longer marches. During the day travellers from Detroit were met, who reported that Tecumseh had arrived at Amherstburg with a very large body of Indians, and that they had seen a party of Sioux at Brownstown with a British flag flying. The River Raisin was crossed by fording on the morning of the 3rd, and scouts sent forward to scour the country. Hull advanced only nine miles, to Swan Creek, where he strongly fortified his encampment for the night with a breastwork of logs. When his scouts reached Brownstown, they found the Indians of that place peacefully engaged in repairing their houses, and on proceeding to the Standing Stone on the river bank, they ascertained that the Sioux had gone over to Amherstburg, and that the *Cuyahoga Packet* had been captured the day before. The advance was continued with great caution next morning to the River Huron, which was bridged to permit the passage of the waggon train. This caused so much delay that they marched but six miles that day, and, owing to the appearance of a British ship of war, the *Queen Charlotte*, in the offing, the whole force lay on its arms all night in considerable apprehension of an attack. While marching through the Wyandot village of Brownstown on the morning of July 5th, it was observed that several of the Indians saluted the General cordially as an old acquaintance, and that they seemed very friendly and much impressed by the size of his force and long train of waggons and pack horses.¹ In the afternoon the sound of cannon was heard in the direction of Detroit, which caused them to hasten their march, in the belief that the British vessels were bombarding the town. The construction of bridges over the Rivière aux Ecorces and River Rouge again delayed them, but on arriving at Spring Wells or Belle Fontaine, three miles below Detroit, it was learned that the appearance of a small body of Canadian militia in the village of Sandwich the day before had been construed as a threat of hostility by some over-zealous officers of the Michigan Legion, who had commenced a fire of artillery and musketry across the river, which General Hull at once ordered them to discontinue as needlessly damaging private property, and went into camp for the night.² He then wrote a letter to the commandant at Amherstburg, informing him that he had not authorized this attack, and enquiring whether the officers' baggage taken on the *Cuyahoga Packet* was considered a proper object of seizure and detention. Colonel

¹ Walker's Journal, pp. 48-50; Lucas Journal, pp. 366-70; Forbes, Trial of General Hull; Magazine of Western History, October, 1888.

² Walker's Journal, p. 50; Lucas Journal, pp. 370-1.

Cass, who was selected to deliver this, was authorized to enter into an arrangement for the exchange of prisoners.¹ Col. St. George courteously replied that "the custom of war must govern his action in respect to the captured property, and that he must await orders as to the proposed exchange of prisoners."² Flags of truce are a common device for obtaining information, and Cass doubtless used his eyes on this occasion. Popular rumour had greatly exaggerated the strength of the British garrison and magnified the number of Indians ten-fold. By some means Hull was speedily informed of the facts and relieved from any anxiety in this respect.

For three nights before, the garrison of Detroit, which consisted of Dyson's company of the 1st United States Artillery and Whistler's company of the 1st United States Infantry, numbering only one hundred and eighteen of all ranks, had been kept under arms with matches burning beside the guns in expectation of an attack. Three companies of the Michigan Legion, which had been mustered into the United States service under the recent volunteer act, occupied the town, and the fourth was stationed at the River Raisin. The repairs upon the fortifications which had been in progress for five months had been completed, and a new battery constructed on the bank of the river opposite Sandwich.

On the 6th and 7th of July, a council with the Indians was held, which was attended by many of the Wyandots, Ottawas, Chippawas, and Pottawatomies, and even by some representatives of the Shawnees, Senecas and Mohawks, all of whom professed friendship but requested time for consultation as to their future course. Consequently, General Hull informed the Secretary of War that great efforts had been made to induce the Indians to join the British, and that the "tomahawk stained with blood" had been offered to them, but the approach of his army had prevented many from accepting it, and he was informed that the number of those at Amherstburg was decreasing. He added that the militia at Detroit had "manifested a laudable and patriotic spirit," and expressed his regret his orders did not permit him a "larger latitude" than merely to "adopt measures for the security of the country."³

His troops were generally in good health and spirits and apparently eager for active operations, while it was evident that great alarm and disorder existed among the Canadian militia at Sandwich.⁴

¹ Hull to St. George, July 6th; Can. Archives, C 676, p. 132; Forbes, Trial of General Hull.

² St. George to Hull, July 6th; Forbes, Trial, Appendix LI, p. 19.

³ Hull to Eustis, July 7th; Forbes, Trial, Appendix II, p. 9.

⁴ Walker's Journal, p. 50; Lucas Journal, p. 373.

The Indians of Illinois were at this time in such distress from the failure of their corn the summer before and the scarcity of game, that they were living upon bark and roots, and had sent a deputation to Governor Harrison, begging in the most humble manner for a small supply of provisions to keep their families from starving. They were told with impolitic harshness that they would receive no assistance until the men who had committed some recent murders were surrendered. So far from having the desired effect, this declaration only drove them into open hostility in the end. Owing to their helpless condition at that time, Harrison felt no apprehension that they would attempt an offensive movement until "roasting ear season," and began to assemble a small force of regulars and militia at Vincennes to overawe and deter them from leaving their families to join the British at Amherstburg.¹

While awaiting orders to begin offensive operations, General Hull removed his encampment to a position in rear of the town of Detroit and began to collect boats for the passage of the river. While thus employed, Tarhe, the principal chief of the Wyandots, called upon him to remonstrate against the seizure of a number of horses left at Brownstown by the Sioux before they crossed the river and they were at once restored.

On July 9th Hull received a letter from the Secretary of War giving him discretionary authority to assume the offensive. "Should the force under your command be equal to the enterprise consistent with the safety of your own posts," he wrote, "you will take possession of Malden and extend your conquests as circumstances may justify. It is only proper to inform you that an adequate force cannot soon be relied on for the reduction of the enemy's posts below you."²

By this time Hull had become less confident, but replied that he was making preparations to cross the river and hoped to take possession of Sandwich in a few days. "The British command the water and the savages," he added, "I do not think the force here equal to the reduction of Amherstburg. You must, therefore, not be too sanguine."³

Already he began to foresee difficulties in obtaining supplies and to entertain doubts whether he had acted wisely in making Detroit his base of operations instead of Brownstown or the Miami, where his line

¹ Harrison to Eustis, 4th March, 1812; Dawson's *Life of Harrison*, pp. 270-2; Harrison to Eustis, July 7th, 1812.

² Hull, *Memoirs*, pp. 40-1. This letter was garbled by General Hull by the omission of the last sentence. See, *Defence of General Dearborn* by H. A. S. Dearborn, p. 10.

³ Forbes, *Trial of General Hull*, Appendix II, p. 9.

of communication would have been comparatively secure.¹ As long before as April 27th, Quartermaster-General Porter of the Ninth Military District (who was also a leading figure in Congress) had been ordered to deposit at Detroit a supply of provisions sufficient to subsist two thousand men for six months. The contract was let by him to his brother, Augustus Porter, who began purchasing in Western New York and Pennsylvania. On June 15th a supplementary order was issued for the deposit of 14,000 rations at Sandusky, whither two companies of Ohio Volunteers were marching, and an additional quantity of 366,000 rations at Detroit. Only a fraction of these supplies had been delivered when the declaration of war became known, and the vigilance of the British warships on Lake Erie prevented the conveyance of the rest by water, and land carriage was impossible. A few small vessels had already been captured and the remainder were locked up in the ports below.² The situation seemed so serious that Hull informed the Secretary of War that as the lake was closed and the contractor unable to supply his demands, he had been forced to make another contract with Mr. Piatt, of Cincinnati, for two hundred thousand rations of flour to be forwarded from Ohio by pack horses, and herds of cattle driven forward for beef, warning him at the same time in the most emphatic terms that the line of communication must be kept open by fresh troops. "This must not be neglected," he concluded. "If it is, this army will perish by hunger."³ To Governor Meigs he wrote in the same urgent strain, appealing to him to detach another body of militia for that purpose.⁴ That zealous and energetic officer lost no time in complying with his request, and authorized the immediate organization of a supply column at Urbana.

Orders were issued for crossing the river on the night of July 10th. The boats were in readiness and the men ready to march when a part of the Ohio militia absolutely refused to invade Canada. This caused much uproar and confusion, several muskets were discharged at random and Major Munson of the 3rd Ohio Regiment was badly wounded. The noise and disorder became so great that General Hull countermanded his orders for the movement. Next morning two entire companies of McArthur's regiment refused to cross the river, and an officer was, in consequence, placed under arrest. Hull directed that a list should be made of the names of all who were unwilling to take part in the inva-

¹ Hull, *Defence*, pp. 79-80.

² *Federal Republican*, 28th July, 1812.

³ Hull to Eustis, July 10th; *Forbes, Trial*, Appendix II, p. 9.

⁴ Hull to Meigs; *Forbes, Trial*, Appendix II, p. 19.

sion, and, finding that they numbered less than one hundred, decided to renew the attempt that night, taking the precaution to divert the attention of the troops at Sandwich from the real point of crossing by the movement of a part of his force in the direction of Spring Wells, threatening their line of retreat to Amherstburg.¹

It will now be necessary to follow the march of events in Upper Canada up to this time. Early in the year, Lieut.-Col. Thomas Bligh St. George, of the 63rd Regiment, an inspecting field officer of militia, who had seen service at Toulon and Corsica, nearly twenty years before, was selected for the command of the Western District by General Brock. His personal courage was beyond question, but before proceeding to his post he acted so strangely, that his superior's confidence in him was greatly shaken.² He arrived at Amherstburg about the 1st of February, and shortly afterwards Colonel Matthew Elliott, the veteran Deputy Superintendent of the Indians, who was attending the session of the Legislature at York as one of the members for the County of Essex, was directed to return to his post and exert his influence in restraining them from hostilities.³ The garrison consisted of a corporal and eleven gunners of the Royal Artillery, under Lieut. Felix Troughton, in charge of four six pounder field guns, and two companies of the 41st Regiment, numbering about one hundred rank and file, commanded by Captain Joseph Tallon. Fort Amherst was a small quadrangular field work composed of four bastions connected by curtains, and surrounded by a line of palisades and a shallow, dry ditch. The palisades were much decayed and the works were faced and lined with wood. The storehouses and barracks were of wood and might easily be burnt by bombardment. The northern and western faces could scarcely be made defensible as they were overlooked and commanded by some high ground within five hundred yards. The garrison ordnance consisted of a single eighteen pounder and five nine pounders. The magazine was cracked from roof to foundation and was not bomb-proof. It was, however, a post of much importance, as it was the sole protection for the naval depot and dockyard of the Provincial Marine on the Upper Lakes, and the place where the Western Indians congregated annually in great numbers to receive their presents from the officers of the Indian Department.⁴ A schooner, designed to carry twelve guns, was then being built at the dockyard.

¹ Lucas, Journal, pp. 375-6; Forbes, Trial, Evidence of Major John Whistler.

² Brock to Baynes, Feb. 12th; Tupper's Life of Brock, pp. 147-50.

³ Niles' Register, Vol. VIII; Brock to Baynes, Feb. 12th.

⁴ Major General Glasgow to Sir George Prevost, 18th Sept., 1811; Prevost to Lord Liverpool, 18th May, 1812; Can. Archives; Freer Papers.

The Village of Amherstburg, or Malden as it was frequently called after the township in which it lay, containing about a hundred and fifty dwellings, was pleasantly seated on the bank of the Detroit River within view of Lake Erie. Here, McKee, Elliott, Caldwell, and other Loyalists had been assigned lands at the close of the American Revolution, and when the British garrison and dockyard were removed thither upon the evacuation of Detroit, a village had soon sprung up inhabited by Loyalists, French Canadians, and Scottish immigrants, most of whom entertained a bitter antipathy towards the United States. The mouth of the river afforded a safe and commodious anchorage for small vessels. The area of cultivation extended along the shore of Lake Erie as far as Point Pelee, a distance of thirty miles. Many of these settlers had emigrated from the United States within ten years and were not likely to resist an invasion with any degree of vigour unless stoutly supported with regular troops. Between Amherstburg and Sandwich lay the thriving and populous French Canadian settlement known as the Petit Côte, stretching along the river for fifteen miles, in which the houses were so close together in many places as to give the appearance of a village street. Most of its inhabitants had lived on the opposite bank until the evacuation of Detroit, when they decided to abandon a place where their lives and property would be at the mercy of "godless men" and follow the British flag across the river.¹ All their houses were built upon the road winding along the Detroit, and their farms were accordingly narrow strips of land a mile and a half in length. They were a cheerful, kindly, hospitable folk, retaining much of the "amenity of manners" of their ancestors. This delightful spot was called "the Eden of Upper Canada" by a contemporary English traveller who had seen it in the glory of a May morning. Every farmhouse was embosomed in an orchard, making the roadside an avenue of blossoming trees which exhaled the most delicate perfumes, while the woods were sweet with the scent of wild flowers and aromatic shrubs.² The Village of Sandwich, nearly opposite Detroit, consisted of thirty or forty log or frame houses, clustered about the ancient mission church of the Hurons, but these Indians had removed some twelve years before to their reserve on the River Canard. At this place there was a small shipyard where several small vessels had been recently built, and two miles farther up the river stood the spacious warehouse of the North

¹ McMaster—History of the American People; Brown—Northwestern Campaign; W. H. Smith—Canada.

² Howison, Travels in Upper Canada, p. 199; Darnell, Journal, pp. 73-8.

West Fur Company, and Moy House, the handsome residence of its well known factor, Angus Mackintosh.

Farms had been brought under cultivation on both banks of the River Thames, from its mouth to the Thirty Mile Woods, in the township of Delaware, where a long stretch of unbroken forest began, extending to the township of Oxford, in which there was another thriving settlement. Many of the people residing here were very recent immigrants from the United States, of whom a goodly number were suspected to be fugitives from justice.¹

The population of the Western District, composed of the counties of Essex and Kent, was estimated at four thousand, while the London District, comprising the counties of Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford, was supposed to contain double that number, of whom fully two-thirds had come from the United States within ten years. These were roughly classified as follows by Colonel Talbot, who possessed unrivalled opportunities for observation:—"1st, Those enticed by a gratuitous offer of land without any predilection on their part to the British Constitution; 2nd, Those who had fled from the United States for crimes or to escape their creditors; 3rd, Republicans whose principal motive for settling in that country is an anticipation of its shaking off its allegiance to Great Britain," and he asserted later on that in the township of Oxford there was a disaffected party "more systematic and violent than the American army."² In Burford Township, Benajah Mallory, late a member of the Assembly, and in Delaware, Simon Zelotes Watson, a surveyor, and Andrew Westbrook, who had quarrelled bitterly with Colonel Talbot over the location of settlers, were leaders of the disaffected, while in the vicinity of Long Point and Port Talbot, loyalists were numerous. The enrolled militiamen of the Western District numbered between seven and eight hundred, of whom it was believed about five hundred might be readily assembled for purposes of defence. The enrolled militia of the London District exceeded a thousand men, but little dependence could be placed on many of them. The villages of the Six Nations on the Grand River contained a population of nearly two thousand persons, of whom, perhaps, four hundred might be classed as warriors. They had the reputation of being peaceful and industrious, cultivating considerable tracts of land and raising fine crops of wheat

¹ Darby, Travels; Melish, Travels; Gourlay, Upper Canada; Brock to Lord Liverpool, 23rd March, 1812; Smith, View of the British Possessions; Brown, Northwestern Campaign; Niles' Register, II, 412.

² Talbot to Sullivan, 27th October, 1802; Talbot to Vincent, 18th May, 1813.

and corn. Their arms in war or in hunting were a rifle or musket, a long spear, tomahawk and hunting knife. The Hurons of the River Canard could turn out about two hundred fighting men, and there were a number of Muncseys and Delawares on the Thames, most of whom were prevented by their religion from bearing arms.¹

The Thames was navigable for small vessels as high as the forks, a distance of nineteen miles. Thence a road following the right bank ran through the Long Woods to Oxford, Ancaster, and the head of Lake Ontario, but except in very dry weather, or when the ground was frozen, it was excessively bad. The distance from Amherstburg to Lake Ontario by this route was two hundred and thirty miles. The route generally followed was by water to Long Point, thence twenty miles across the plains to the village of the Six Nations where there was a bridge and a ford on the Grand River. From this place it was twenty-eight miles to the head of Lake Ontario, the road passing through the woods for six miles and for the remainder of the way over plains.²

Elliott's first step after his return was to devise means to convey a message to Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet "to retreat or turn aside if the Big Knives should come against them." For this purpose he selected Isidore Chesne, a Huron who had been employed as an interpreter in the Indian Department during the Revolution, and Walk-in-the-Water obtained a safe conduct from the Acting Governor of Michigan for two of his tribesmen to go to the Wabash to attend a council.³ Parties of Indians continued to arrive at Amherstburg to solicit ammunition for hunting, as their families were in great distress; some of them coming from the vicinity of the Mississippi. A limited quantity of powder, amounting in all to about twelve hundred pounds, was issued to them in response to their insistent demands, but they were invariably refused lead, of which they had not received an ounce since December, 1811, and many of them lingered at Amherstburg in hope of eventually having their wants supplied, meanwhile drawing provisions from the Government store.

On his arrival at Fort Wayne, Isidore Chesne presented a letter from Mr. Atwater to the Indian Agent at that place, requesting him to furnish Chesne with a canoe, but on learning that he bore a message from Colonel Elliott to the Indians of the Wabash, he refused to give him any assistance, and he was obliged to continue his journey on foot.

¹ Smith, View. Watson formerly lived at Montreal, where he had been appointed a Justice of the Peace.

² National Intelligencer, January, 1813; Notes on Upper Canada. Memo. by Lieut.-Col. Glegg.

³ Claus to Brock, 16th June, 1812; Lucas to Foster, 4th November, 1812.

On hearing of his approach, Tecumseh advanced to meet him at Mache-kethe, on the Wabash River, sixty miles west of Fort Wayne. He was accompanied by six hundred warriors of twelve different nations, and left three hundred more at his village busily engaged in the manufacture of bows and arrows, as they had no ammunition for their firearms.¹

He returned a written reply to Elliott's message, thanking him for his kindness to their women and children and laying the blame of the recent troubles on the frontier upon the Pottawatomies, who, upon hearing that a deputation from the Hurons were on their way to the Wabash "for peaceable purposes, grew very angry all at once and killed twenty-seven of the Big Knives."

"You tell us to retreat or to turn to one side should the Big Knives come against us; had I been at home in the late unfortunate affair I should have done so, but those I left at home were (I cannot call them men) a poor set of people, and their scuffle with the Big Knives I compared to a struggle between little children who scratch each other's faces."

After this contemptuous allusion to the attack on the American encampment at Tippecanoe, he concluded his speech with the following resolute declaration:—

"If we hear of the Big Knives coming towards our villages to speak peace, we will receive them; but if we hear any of our people being hurt by them, or if they unprovokedly advance against us in a hostile manner, be assured we will defend ourselves like men, and if we hear of any of our people being killed we will immediately send to all the nations on or towards the Mississippi and all this island will rise as one man. Then, father and brothers, it will be impossible for you or either of you to restore peace between us."² In the course of a private conversation Tecumseh said, that "all the nations were aware of the desire the Americans have of destroying the red people (meaning the English), and taking their country from them."³

Being thoroughly convinced that war was inevitable, General Brock was strongly opposed to the policy which had been adopted with respect to the Indians and lost no opportunity of protesting against its continuance. His point of view was entirely that of a soldier. Every day that war was delayed would increase his difficulties. The American agents, he urged, were actively at work among all the tribes, divisions were sown amongst them and their minds estranged from the British Government.

¹ Claus to Brock, 16th June, 1812; Lucas to Foster, 4th November, 1812.

² Tecumseh's Speech, *Can. Arch.*, C 676, p. 147.

³ Claus to Brock, 16th June, 1812, *Can. Arch.*, C 676, p. 144.

"Such must inevitably be the consequence of our present inert and neutral proceedings in regard to them. It ill becomes me to determine how long true policy requires that the restrictions now imposed upon the Indian Department ought to continue, but this I will venture to assert that each day the officers are restrained from interfering in the concerns of the Indians, each time they advise peace and withhold the accustomed supply of ammunition, their influence will diminish till at last they lose it altogether. It will then become a question whether that country can be maintained."¹ This remonstrance was, of course, disregarded as the Governor-General was acting upon instructions from the Colonial Office.² Brock, however, continued to form plans for offensive operations, and proposed with that view to send the whole of the 41st Regiment and a detachment of artillery with a mortar battery to Amherstburg as soon as the arrival of another battalion of regular troops from Lower Canada would permit. Other schemes for the protection of the western frontier of Upper Canada which occupied his active mind at this time, but which he was unable to carry into effect, contemplated the construction of a battery to protect the anchorage at Long Point, the fortification of the harbour of Amherstburg and the equipment of a flotilla of gunboats upon Lake Erie. The active co-operation of the Indians, he remarked, must necessarily be attended by a large expenditure for arms, clothing and provisions.³

Colonel St. George's first care was to accumulate a sufficient supply of provisions for the maintenance of a considerable force. For this purpose he engaged confidential agents to purchase on both sides of the river with but moderate success, as there was great scarcity of cattle and grain of all kinds, due to a prolonged drought and premature frost the year before.⁴

In April the flank companies of the Essex regiments of militia were organized and began drilling. The commandant at Detroit responded by authorizing the enlistment of a troop of volunteer cavalry and a company of infantry, and the construction of a battery armed with three heavy guns on the river bank opposite Sandwich. Early in May a report reached St. George that twelve hundred militia were assembling at Urbana and a thousand regulars at Cincinnati, which seemed so important that he despatched a special messenger to inform

¹ Brock to Prevost, 25th February, 1812, Can. Arch., C 676, p. 92.

² Lord Liverpool to Prevost, 28th July, 1811.

³ Memorandum by Brock to Prevost, Can. Arch., C 728, p. 68.

⁴ St. George to Glegg, 9th and 10th of March, 1812, Can. Arch. C 116, pp. 62-4.

Brock, who at once ordered Captain Manly C. Dixon, of the Royal Engineers, to Amherstburg to superintend repairs, and the works on the Niagara were stripped of their guns to arm those at Amherstburg until artillery could be brought from Kingston to replace them. As has already been noted, General Brock himself brought up a reinforcement of a hundred men of the 41st Regiment on the 14th of June, but he only remained three days. In consequence of the evident activity of the garrison of Detroit, the flank companies of Essex militia were placed on duty on the 23rd of June. St. George seems to have received information of the actual declaration of war from the officials of Northwest Fur Company as early as the 28th June, only three days after it became known to their agent at Queenston. A detachment of militia was at once marched to Sandwich with instructions to picket the river, while the remainder of the Essex and Kent regiments were warned to be in readiness to turn out. The ferryboats plying on the river were detained to prevent information from reaching the American side.¹ On the evening of July 1st, St. George received a letter from Brock, dated at Fort George on June 28th, which directed him to commence offensive operations as soon as possible, and he began preparations for crossing the river.² On the following morning a schooner under American colours was observed entering the navigable channel which lay close to the Canadian shore. She was brought to by a gun from the sloop *General Hunter*, and immediately boarded by a boat manned by Lieut. Frederick Rolette of that vessel, with six seamen only. He was somewhat surprised and startled to find her deck crowded with American soldiers, but, having served under Nelson at the Nile and Trafalgar, he acted with as much confidence and decision as if he had an overwhelming force at his command, and ordered every person on deck to go below in such an authoritative voice, that they obeyed without offering the least resistance. Armed sentries were at once posted upon the hatchways and the arm-chest, whom he ordered to shoot down any one who attempted to come near them, and the man at the wheel was directed to steer the vessel under the guns of the water battery at Amherstburg. Before this was accomplished he was joined by Thomas Vercheres de Boucherville, of the Northwest Fur Company, with a few volunteers from the dockyard in a canoe. The prize proved to be the *Cuyahoga Packet* conveying the officers' baggage and medical stores of

¹ New York Gazette, 31st July, 1812.

² St. George to Brock, 8th July, 1812, Can. Arch., C 676, p. 134; Brock to Prevost, 3rd July, Can. Arch. C 676, p. 115; Coffin, p. 198; Quebec Mercury, 1812; L'Observateur, 26th March, 1831.

General Hull's force, besides a quantity of spare clothing. Of far greater value were the papers and correspondence of that officer, including field states and complete returns of his troops, everything, in fact, that an alert and enterprising enemy could desire to obtain. Among them were found a rough, incomplete draft of Hull's memorial of March 6th, his letters to the Secretary of War of the 24th and 26th of June, and the Secretary's letter of the 18th of June, directing him to hasten his march to Detroit. St. George was not in a position to take any immediate advantage of the information thus unexpectedly thrown into his hands, but transmitted the most important documents to Brock, who eventually made effective use of them. Among the prisoners taken were Captain Sharp, Hull's Adjutant-General, his principal medical officer, three infantry officers, and thirty-five non-commissioned officers or privates, most of whom were sick. A few hours later a momentary alarm was caused by the appearance of a flotilla of boats, which were soon ascertained to be a brigade of *bateaux* belonging to the Southwest Fur Company, commanded by Messrs. Lacroix and Berthelet, loaded with stores for Lake Superior. As the directors of the Company had long since placed all their resources at the disposal of the Government in case of war, these *bateaux*, eleven in number, were detained, their crews, numbering seventy men, were pressed into service, and their cargoes, consisting largely of arms, ammunition, and blankets, appropriated for the use of the militia and Indians. Hitherto the advantage derived from the presence in the river of two vessels of the Provincial Marine had been almost neutralized by the weakness of their crews, as the *Queen Charlotte* was manned by a single lieutenant and twenty-seven petty officers and men, and the *General Hunter* by a lieutenant and seventeen petty officers and men.¹ The opportune arrival of these *voyageurs* enabled St. George not only to strengthen their crews but to man some of the boats to patrol the river. The deficiency of trained naval officers could not be supplied. Commodore Alexander Grant, who was nominally in command, was upwards of eighty years of age, and totally unfit for service, while Captain Hall, the next senior officer, was acting as superintendent of the dockyard.

On the 2nd of July, at noon, another messenger arrived with a letter from Brock instructing St. George to remain upon the defensive until further orders were received. Brock explained in a letter to Prevost that this change of policy was due to "the reflection that at Detroit and St. Joseph's the weak state of the garrisons would prevent the commanders from attempting any essential service connected in any

¹ Can. Arch.

degree with their future security.”¹ The next three days were therefore actively employed in strengthening the fortifications and organizing the militia. The bastions were fraised, the curtains finished, the escarp deepened, gun platforms repaired, and a splinter proof building completed inside the fort at Amherstburg. Twenty guns were mounted, and nearly 850 militia, being practically the whole of three regiments of the Western District, were mustered into service.² Great exertions were likewise made to conciliate and retain the good-will of the Indians already assembled there, among whom were representatives of nearly every nation of any consequence residing in the northwestern territories of the United States east of the Mississippi. Tecumseh, with a small band of devoted followers and thirty Menomonees of tried courage and fidelity, despatched by Robert Dickson from his trading post on the Wisconsin portage, were among the most recent arrivals, and fortunately for the success of his subsequent operations, Brock’s letter of June 29th had arrived too late to prevent St. George from despatching messengers to the distant nations requiring their speedy assistance.³

In consequence of the approach of General Hull, whose destination was known to be Detroit from the intercepted correspondence, Colonel James Baby was directed to occupy Sandwich with four hundred militia on the 4th, but on the following afternoon this force was driven out of the village by a smart cannonade from the American batteries, which likewise caused many of the terrified inhabitants to seek shelter over night in the neighbouring woods. Baby rather hastily determined to abandon his position, and retreated as far as the bridge over the Canard River within four miles of Amherstburg, where he met Captain Muir with fifty men of the 41st Regiment in waggons and two small field guns moving to his support, and was induced to return. Two heavy guns were sent thither afterwards, and Baby was instructed to maintain his ground as long as practicable without endangering the safety of his force. The schooner *Nancy*, belonging to the Northwest Fur Company, was brought down from the wharf at Moy and anchored in the channel near Amherstburg to take the place of the *Hunter*, which was despatched to Fort Erie for reinforcements. Some small brass guns, mounted on the *Nancy*, were utilized to arm the row boats patrolling the river. A grand council of the Indians at Amherstburg on the 7th was attended by nearly two hundred chiefs and warriors, and

¹ Brock to Prevost, July 3rd, 1812, Can. Arch., C 676, p. 115.

² Captain M. C. Dixon to Lieut.-Col. Bruyeres, R.E., 18th July, 1812; St. George to Brock, 8th July, 1812.

³ Wells to Harrison, July 12th, 1812.

Tecumseh was distinguished by his ardent and thorough-going advocacy of the British cause. A small troop of Essex militia dragoons was organized for patrol duty and conveyance of despatches.

Finding that the militia stationed at Sandwich were in a very nervous mood, St. George determined to withdraw them from that place before it was attacked, although Muir was anxious to dispute the passage of the river. Orders were accordingly given to the inhabitants to drive all their cattle to the vicinity of Amherstburg, the guns and baggage were removed, and Sandwich was evacuated on the afternoon of the 11th, Captain Muir's detachment of the 41st retiring behind the River Canard, while the militia, who had manifested a strong disposition to disband and return to their farms, were marched to Amherstburg.

In carrying out the instructions of the Secretary of War to establish his base of operations at Detroit, General Hull perceived that his long line of communication with Ohio must necessarily be exposed to attack, but he seemed to believe that they allowed him no discretion in this respect. The main-travelled road by which he had advanced, closely followed the shore of the river and lake to the Miami, a distance of some seventy miles, although there was a little known trail through the woods some distance farther back seldom, if ever, passable by wagons. To provide for the safety of either of these routes, it was necessary to secure and preserve the friendship of the neighbouring Indians, and to ensure this he announced his intention of building blockhouses and establishing small garrisons at the River Rouge, Brownstown, and the River Raisin. The necessary preparations for the invasion of Canada caused him to defer this most unwisely, until it became too late.¹

A sufficient number of boats to carry two regiments across the river at once had been collected at Detroit, and on the afternoon of July 11th, these were taken down the river to the shipyard at the mouth of the Rouge where the brig *Adams* was being rebuilt, and McArthur's regiment was ostentatiously marched in the same direction in broad daylight. After dark the boats were again taken up the river to Bloody Bridge, where several heavy guns were placed in position to cover the passage of the troops. The 4th United States Infantry and Dyson's artillery company, with three field guns, crossed the Detroit shortly after midnight, followed by the three Ohio regiments with the exception of about one hundred men who still positively refused to pass the boundary of the United States under any circumstances. At daybreak their patrols entered Sandwich and ascertained that it had not only been abandoned by the garrison but by nearly all the inhabitants as well,

¹ Hull, *Defence*, pp. 79-80.

who dreaded their approach as if they were savages.¹ The whole force then advanced to the village and encamped on the farm of Lieut.-Colonel Baptiste Baby, where there was ample pasturage for their horses, and Hull established his headquarters in that officer's unfinished brick house.

In anticipation of this movement General Hull had prepared a carefully worded proclamation to the inhabitants of Canada which was felicitously described by the Governor-General as "artful and insidious."² After the General's death its authorship was claimed for Cass, and it certainly contains certain flights of rhetoric which may possibly have been inspired by him. It had been translated into French and a considerable number of broadsides were printed in both languages.³ Promises and threats were skilfully mingled in pompous and stilted language. Different arguments were addressed to different classes. To the older inhabitants of the province, the loyalists and British-born colonists, he said:—

"Separated by an immense ocean and an extensive wilderness from Great Britain, you have no participation in her councils, no interest in her conduct; you have felt her tyranny, you have seen her injustice, but I do not ask you to avenge the one or to redress the other. The United States are sufficiently powerful to afford you every security consistent with their rights and your expectations. I tender you the invaluable blessings of civil, political, and religious liberty, and their necessary results, individual and general prosperity."

Then plainly appealing to the recent immigrants from the United States so numerous in the London District, he continued:—

"Raise not your hands against your brethren. Many of your forefathers fought for the freedom and *Independence* we now enjoy; being children therefore of the same family with us and heirs to the same heritage, the arrival of an army of friends must be hailed by you with a cordial welcome. You will be emancipated from tyranny and oppression and restored to the dignified position of freemen. Had I any doubt of eventual success, I might ask your assistance, but I do not. I come prepared for every contingency. I have a force which will look down all opposition, and that force is but the vanguard of a much greater." Finally, the language of menace was substituted for that of persuasion.

"If, contrary to your own interests and the just expectation of my country, you should take part in the approaching contest, you will

¹ Major Denny to John Carlisle, *New York Gazette*, 4th September, 1812.

² Prevost to Lord Liverpool, 30th July, 1812.

³ Hull to Eustis, 13th July, 1812, *Forbes*, Appendix II., p. 10.

be considered and treated, as enemies, and the horrors and calamities of war will stalk before you.

"If the barbarous and savage policy of Great Britain be pursued and the savages let loose to murder our citizens and butcher our women and children, this war will be a war of extermination.

"The first stroke with the tomahawk, the first attempt with the scalping knife will be the signal for one indiscriminate scene of desolation. *No white man found fighting by the side of an Indian will be taken prisoner.* Instant destruction will be his lot. If the dictates of reason, duty, justice, and humanity cannot prevent the employment of a force which respects no rights and knows no wrongs, it will be prevented by a severe and relentless system of retaliation."

After his previous advice to remain at their homes and pursue "their customary and peaceful vocations," his readers may well have been mystified by the concluding sentences:

"If you tender your services voluntarily, they will be accepted readily. The United States offer you *Peace, Liberty and Security*, your choice lies between these and *War, Slavery and Destruction*. Choose then, but choose wisely, and may he who knows the justice of our cause and who holds in his hands the fate of Nations, guide you to a result the most compatible with your rights and interests, your peace and prosperity."¹

This document was expected to produce a great effect, and subsequently became the subject of much ridicule from the opponents of the American Government. John Randolph, of Roanoke, sarcastically referred to Hull's operations as a "holiday campaign" in which Canada was expected "to conquer herself and be subdued by the principle of fraternity." The anonymous author of the "Wars of the Gulls" makes President Madison say:—"By proclamation my illustrious predecessor defended this extensive region during a long and warlike reign of eight years and brought the belligerent powers to his feet. By proclamation I have commenced this great and perilous war, and by proclamation I will carry victory to the very chimney corner of the enemy."

By occupying Sandwich, General Hull expected to interrupt the communication between Amherstburg and the thriving settlements on the River Thames, and by means of his solitary armed vessel eventually gain control of Lakes Huron and Michigan, provision the garrisons of Mackinac and Chicago, and intimidate the Indians of that region. With these views in mind he began at once to fortify his position and to

¹ Proclamation in Canadian Archives, C 676, p. 168. The italics are as in the original.

build a small redoubt at Gowie's house on the water side to command the river.¹ The remainder of the field artillery and most of the cavalry were brought over. Some non-combatants timidly returned to the village during the day.

On the following morning a strong patrol of Ohio riflemen was sent out on the road to Amherstburg to reconnoitre and distribute proclamations in the Petit Côte. They advanced as far as Turkey Creek, where they found the bridge destroyed and discovered signs of a deserted bivouac. They were assured by an inhabitant that Indians were lurking in the vicinity and returned to the camp, taking with them a couple of horses supposed to be the property of officers of the Essex militia, which General Hull received as a lawful prize. At night a false alarm put the entire camp under arms.² The fortifications about the encampment were completed on the 14th, and Colonel McArthur, with a party of dragoons and three companies of his own regiment, was instructed to march across to the Thames to disperse a body of Indians reported to have gone from Amherstburg in that direction, and obtain provisions, distributing proclamations along the route, and, if possible, getting in touch with the disaffected inhabitants. All the carpenters and other artificers that could be assembled, were formed into a separate corps under Captain Thorpe, and set to work repairing gun carriages and building floating batteries for the conveyance of heavy artillery, and a number of scaling ladders were also constructed for the contemplated assault on Amherstburg.³ A number of men, representing themselves as deserters from the Essex militia, daily came in desiring permission to return to their homes, which was readily granted, although some of them were suspected of acting as spies. In fact, the militia assembled by St. George complained so bitterly of their hard fate in being called away from their farms in an apparently hopeless contest at a time when their crops were fast ripening and their families needed their assistance in the harvest field, that he gave permission to some of the oldest and least efficient to return to their homes. So many others went away by stealth without leave, in three days, that the number under arms was reduced to 471.⁴ Those who remained seemed well disposed, but greatly intimidated by reports of the numerical superiority of the invaders. They had no uniforms and lacked arms and equipment to make them efficient in the field. Some of their officers were too old

¹ Hull to Eustis, 13th July, 1812, and 15th July, 1812.

² Lucas, *Journal*, pp. 377-8.

³ Walker, pp. 54-5.

⁴ Lucas, *Journal*, p. 378; Forbes, *Trial*; St. George to Brock, 15th July, 1812, *Can. Arch.*, C 676, p. 177.

for service, and others totally incompetent. Including boys and old men, he supposed that he could muster at this date about three hundred Indians capable of bearing arms, but as they were continually coming and going, it was scarcely possible to ascertain their exact number. He wished to restrain them from assuming the offensive until he was in a position to support them effectively, but found them so anxious to act at once, that he was forced to consent that a party should join Captain Muir at the Canard River, where he intended to establish his outpost line. Meanwhile, the fortifications were strengthened and the schooner *Lady Prevost*, which had been launched on July 13th, was being equipped for service.¹

Hull's troops appeared so eager to advance without further delay, that he assembled his principal officers to consider whether it was advisable to attempt to carry the British works by assault. Lieut.-Colonel Miller, of the 4th United States Infantry, was willing to answer for his own regiment, but the volunteer officers seemed doubtful whether their men could be relied upon, and it was finally decided to postpone the movement until a train of siege artillery could be made ready.

Learning from deserters that a British outpost was stationed at the Long Bridge over the Canard River, Lieut.-Colonel Miller and Colonel Cass were instructed to reconnoitre its position with about three hundred men, consisting of some dragoons and rangers, one company of the 4th United States Infantry, one company of Ohio volunteers, and four companies of Ohio riflemen. When within a couple of miles of the bridge, their mounted scouts reported that it was occupied by a party of British regulars with two guns, who had sentries posted on the road in advance. Contrary to his instructions, Colonel Cass, who seems to have assumed command, determined on an attack. Sending forward along the road the dragoons and rangers and one company of riflemen to engage the attention of the outpost, he undertook a wide turning movement with the remainder, having ascertained from two of the inhabitants whom he compelled to act as guides, that there was ford some miles up stream. Crossing the Canard at this point he moved through the woods on the farther side until he came to the open ground, where a small party of Indians were lying in the long grass. These were so utterly taken by surprise that they ran away without firing a shot, exposing the line of retreat of the outpost about a mile away. The Americans were prevented from pursuing by a creek flowing nearly at right angles into the Canard, which they were obliged to ascend some distance before crossing, and the Indians escaped,

¹ St. George to Brock, 15th July; Elliott to Claus, 15th July, Can. Arch., C 676.

giving the alarm by their yells.¹ Lieut. Clemow, of the 41st, who was in command, perceived his danger, and began his retreat with such haste that two sentries posted beyond the bridge were not withdrawn. In crossing the creek Cass's force fell into much disorder, and upon reaching the edge of the woods, halted irresolutely for about half an hour, thus enabling Clemow to get off without loss, although there was some firing on both sides at such a distance as to be totally ineffective. About the same time the riflemen on the opposite side of the Canard advanced upon the sentries, Privates Dean and Hancock, of the 41st Regiment, who remained stubbornly at their posts, firing upon them repeatedly and refusing to surrender until the former received three and the latter four wounds. After one of Dean's arms was broken by a shot, he still endeavoured to resist his assailants with his bayonet until he was knocked down and disarmed. Hancock was removed to a shed near by where he died that night.² In a General Order of August 6th, the Governor-General drew the attention of all ranks to the remarkable "heroism and self-devotion" of these two private soldiers, who were the first to shed their blood in defence of Canada during this war. "An instance of such firmness and intrepidity," he said, "deserves to be thus publicly recorded, and His Excellency trusts it will not fail to animate the troops under his command with an ardent desire to follow so noble an example whenever an opportunity shall be hereafter offered them." In truth the dauntless stand made by these two stalwart soldiers was not likely to be soon forgotten by their comrades.

Shortly before the attack on the outpost took place, Captain Brown, of the 4th United States Infantry, bearing a message from General Hull to Colonel St. George under a flag of truce, requesting the return of papers and private property taken in the *Cuyahoga Packet*, had been allowed to pass on his way to Amherstburg, and this singular proceeding naturally provoked a strong feeling of resentment at the time.³

Cass established an outpost at the bridge and encamped the remainder of his force a mile or two nearer Sandwich, sending back a messenger to request a reinforcement to enable him to maintain his position there. Hull had as yet received no report from McArthur, who had been absent forty-eight hours, and felt alarmed for his safety. He could not conceal his annoyance at this attempt of an ambitious subordinate to force him into a premature advance when he had been sent out merely to gain information, and was decidedly opposed to the occupation of an

¹ Lucas, 380-2; Walker, 56.

² Richardson, 20-1; Coffin.

³ Hull to St. George, 16th July, 1812; St. George to Hull, 16th July, 1812; Lucas, 382.

advanced post so near Amherstburg. A verbal order was accordingly sent to Cass to return at once to camp as the General was not yet prepared to attack the fort, and he could not consent to divide his forces. But being informed that firing had again been heard in the direction of the Canard River, he ordered the remainder of the 4th Infantry with a field gun to move to Cass's support. On receiving the order to return, Cass and Miller wrote a joint letter urging the advantage of holding the bridge. Hull promptly replied in writing that it would be a week before his siege artillery could be made ready, warning them against the danger of being cut off by a turning movement by the Canard ford or on the Detroit River, but giving them permission to act on their own discretion. By this time some boats filled with soldiers were observed ascending the river and a council of war was assembled which decided to retreat, Cass and Captain Snelling of the 4th Infantry alone opposing this determination. On arriving at Sandwich they found that McArthur had likewise returned from his foraging expedition, while a smaller party, under Captain Forsyth, had brought in a valuable flock of merino sheep, imported by Lord Selkirk for breeding purposes, as the result of a raid upon the Scottish settlement at Baldoon.¹ McArthur had advanced with his infantry as far as the mills on the Thames, near the site of the present city of Chatham, where he took possession of a quantity of grain and flour which was brought away in boats. A formal parole binding them not to bear arms during the war was exacted from the male inhabitants along their line of march, among whom was John McGregor, one of the representatives of the County of Essex in the House of Assembly. Some of McArthur's horsemen rode up the river as far as the townships of Delaware and Westminster, distributing proclamations as they went, and were joined by Simon Watson, Andrew Westbrook, and other disaffected inhabitants.²

Not less than sixty persons, representing themselves as deserters from the Canadian militia, came into Hull's camp that day, some of whom seem to have expressed a desire to enlist under his command. They reported that all the women and children had been sent away for safety from the fort and Indian camps at Amherstburg, that many more of the militia were ready to desert, and that the Indians were daily returning to their villages. Hull advised these men to go to their homes and promised them protection. He was so greatly encouraged by their information, that he announced his intention of advancing

¹ Lucas Journal, pp. 381-2; Hull Defence, pp. 128-132; Forbes, *Trial, passim*. Letter from Capt. Ulery in Poulson's American.

² McDonald, *Life of McArthur*; Brock to Prevost, 26th July, Quebec Mercury; Walker, 55.

against Amherstburg as soon as the necessary preparations could be made for moving the siege artillery.¹ Accordingly, Colonel Findlay was despatched with a strong detachment of his regiment the same evening to re-occupy the Canard bridge. On his arrival there, however, he found a strong British outpost again in possession, who had taken up the bridge and built a breastwork of timber on the other side. The *Queen Charlotte* was anchored near the mouth of the Canard with her guns trained upon the approaches to the bridge. Two field guns were also seen in position. On Findlay's return with this information, Captain Snelling was sent out with two companies of infantry and a party of dragoons to patrol the road during the night, and on the 19th Colonel McArthur with two hundred riflemen and a field gun was despatched to make a careful reconnaissance. Several shots were fired at a group of horsemen from a small gun mounted on a row boat concealed among the reeds, which did no damage but caused great confusion, and a few Indians crossing the Canard on the timbers of the bridge brought on a brisk skirmish in which McArthur's horse was killed and two of his men wounded. After a great expenditure of ammunition, McArthur began his march back to camp, but after going a few miles he met Cass's regiment coming to his support with another field gun. Although they had received positive orders not to bring on an engagement, Cass insisted upon returning to the bridge to fire a few rounds from this gun. The *Queen Charlotte* and the gun boat replied, after which McArthur retired to the Petit Côte and encamped for the night. Next morning Cass persuaded him to advance again to the Canard with his whole force, and several hours were occupied in making a purposeless demonstration against the British position, in which a few ineffective shots were exchanged from the artillery. In the afternoon they returned to camp, having accomplished nothing beyond making their men thoroughly tired and discontented.²

Deserters still continued to arrive at Sandwich bringing most encouraging information to General Hull. On the 19th of July he wrote to the Secretary of War, that fifty or sixty militia had deserted from Amherstburg every day since his landing, and that the number remaining there was less than a hundred, whom he expected to follow this example in a day or two. The Indians were reported to be dispersing nearly as rapidly, while he had a large council of friendly nations assembled at Brownstown in response to an invitation he had given them before leaving Urbana, and he had no doubt but that they

¹ Hull to Eustis, 18th July, 1812; Forbes, Trial.

² Lucas Journal, 384-7; McArthur to Morris, 24th July, 1812; Federal Republican of Baltimore, 26th August, 1812. Letter from Capt. J. Cook.

would remain neutral. He had removed the brig *Adams* to Detroit, where she would be armed and equipped for service, giving him command of the upper Lakes.¹

Two days later he reported the result of this council, which had been attended by representatives of the Six Nations and eight western tribes. Five leading chiefs, of whom the Wyandot, Walk-in-the-Water, was one, had made great exertions to detach the Indians from the British, and Tecumseh and Marpot were the only chiefs of consequence who still remained at Amherstburg. He had requested them all to proceed at once to another council at Piqua.²

Tecumseh, in fact, had indignantly declined to be present, saying: "I have taken sides with the King, my Father, and I will suffer my bones to bleach upon this shore rather than cross that stream to join in any council of neutrality." As a last resort he had sent off a carefully wrought belt to summon his adherents to his assistance from Indiana and Illinois. This belt was described as being six feet long and three feet wide, painted red as an emblem of war, and known as the King's Broad Axe, which was intended to cut down everything that stood in its path. The bearer was instructed to dissuade the Indians from attending the proposed council at Piqua, and warn them that their villages would probably be attacked in their absence. Stickney, the Indian agent at Fort Wayne, attempted to intercept his messengers without success.³ About the same time, the Shawnee Prophet with a band of nearly a hundred Indians made his appearance at that place, where he remained for a week. They made strong professions of friendship and stated that they had rejected an invitation from the British to take up the tomahawk.⁴

General Hull also took the precaution to address a special proclamation to the Six Nations residing at the Grand River: "The powerful army under my command is now in possession of Canada," he said. "To you who are friendly, it will afford safety and protection. All your lands, and all your rights of every kind will be guaranteed to you if you will take no part against us. I salute you in friendship and hope you will now act such a part as will promote your interest, your safety, and happiness."⁵

¹ Hull to the Secretary of State, 19th July, 1812; Defence of General Dearborn, by H. A. S. Dearborn, pp. 10-11.

² Hull to Eustis, 21st July, 1812; Id., p. 11.

³ B. F. Stickney to John Johnson, 20th July, 1812; National Intelligencer of Washington, 27th August, 1812; Federal Republican, 29th August, 1812.

⁴ Ibid, Wells to Harrison, 12th July, 1812.

⁵ Hull to the Six Nations, 18th July, 1812, in New York Gazette, 20th August, 1812.

On the afternoon of the 21st he recrossed the river to Detroit for the purpose of hastening preparations for laying siege to Amherstburg, which he informed the Secretary of War might be taken by storm, but at too great a sacrifice of life to be justified. As the carriages for his mortars and other heavy guns must be entirely rebuilt, he anticipated that these preparations would still occupy two weeks. At the same time he projected an attack upon the *Queen Charlotte*, and a large merchant schooner was brought from the River Rouge to Detroit to be armed for this enterprise. Lieut.-Colonel Miller with one battalion of the 4th Infantry accompanied him, and Colonel McArthur succeeded to the command of the troops in Canada.¹ His first act was to order Captain McCullough to reconnoitre the back road to Amherstburg, which was done accordingly with his command of rangers on the 22nd; as far as the ford of the Canard, but hearing the report of guns on the other side they did not venture to cross that stream but followed its course as far as the bridge, where they observed the British outpost entrenching its position. They were informed that the Shawnee Prophet and his band had joined the British, and that a party of Indians had advanced to the Petit Côte the day before. On the evening of the 24th Major James Denny, with Captain McCullough's rangers and three companies of McArthur's regiment, was sent out to intercept a party of Indians reported to be lurking in the woods. Advancing within sight of the Canard bridge he concealed his men for the night in a wheat field. While it was yet dark a band of twenty-two Menomonees ascended the Detroit in their canoes as far as the mouth of Turkey Creek, where they landed and lay in ambush. They were accompanied by Captain Laurent Bondy of the Essex militia, who proceeded to visit his family in the Petit Côte. A straggler from Denny's command returning towards Sandwich was shot dead by the Indians, who left his body lying on the road without scalping it, as they had promised Captain Elliott to abstain from this practice which excited so much abhorrence among white people. In passing through the settlement Denny received information that enabled him to capture Captain Bondy in his own house. After sending off his prisoner under escort, he spent several hours in scouring the woods without success. Halting to rest in the woods most of his men went to sleep, when they were suddenly roused by the Indians firing upon them from all sides and raising the war whoop. An instant panic resulted and some of the drafted militia ran off at full speed, never halting till they reached camp.² Fearing

¹ Hull to Eustis, 22nd July, 1812; Forbes, *Trial*, Lucas Journal, p. 389.

² Federal Republican, 24th August, 1812. Letter from Capt. Ulery, New York Gazette, 12th August, 1812. Letter from Detroit, 28th July.

that he might be surrounded and cut off, Denny ordered a retreat and was pursued as far as Turkey Creek, losing five men killed and ten or twelve wounded, and leaving behind him thirty rifles, besides knapsacks and other accoutrements thrown away by the fugitives. Here he met a rifle company advancing to his support. In this affair Captain McCullough killed an Indian whom he promptly scalped, and another Indian was wounded. McCullough was very proud of his trophy, which he carried through the streets of Sandwich dangling from his naked arm, and afterwards exhibited in the camp.¹

The Menomonees conveyed the body of their dead comrade to Amherstburg, and carrying it to Elliott's quarters clamorously retracted their promise to abstain from scalping in future.²

Denny's mishap coming close upon the heels of so many fruitless reconnaissances, caused considerable depression in the American camp and a corresponding feeling of elation at Amherstburg, where the importance of these affairs was not unnaturally magnified.

On Sunday, 26th July, a vessel flying British colours was seen coming down the river, which was brought to anchor by a shot from the battery at Sandwich. She proved to be the schooner *Salina* from Mackinac, having on board Lieut. Hanks and his detachment of the 1st United States Artillery, lately forming the garrison of that place, which had been taken ten days previously by a British force from St. Joseph's. Nothing could be more unexpected or disconcerting than this intelligence, and its effects must necessarily be far-reaching when it became known to the Indians. General Hull had little doubt that the whole of the "great northern hive" would immediately become hostile.

The rocky islet of Mackinac, or Michilimackinac, lies like a huge natural fortress in the entrance of the strait leading from Lake Huron to Lake Michigan. It is about nine miles in circumference and its cliffs rise precipitously in many places almost two hundred feet above the level of the surrounding water. Here a small fort had been built in 1780 by Lieut.-Governor Patrick Sinclair, which had been transferred to the United States sixteen years later when its small British garrison was removed to a post on the island of St. Joseph in Lake Huron, forty-five miles distant.

Since its occupation by the Americans, a number of British fur traders had continued their dealings with the Indians within the terri-

¹ Lucas Journal, pp. 391-2; Procter to Brock, 26th July; Quebec Mercury, Letter from Fort George, 7th August, 1812; Letter in Boston Messenger, dated Detroit, 28th July, 1812; Foster, The Capitulation.

² Coffin, The War and its Moral, p. 198; Walker, pp. 56-7.

tory of the United States in spite of the most determined efforts to exclude them. Among these, probably the most energetic and influential was Robert Dickson, who had traded on the Mississippi and Missouri for twenty-five years, and had ascended the latter river to its source, unaccompanied by any white companion.¹ Among the Sioux, Pawnees, and Dakotas, his name was a household word. In the autumn of 1811 he had again succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the American officials, who had been instructed to enforce most rigidly the recent act of Congress prohibiting the importation of British goods, and reached his customary trading station at Prairie du Chien with a large supply of merchandise. He found that all the Indians there were in great distress in consequence of the failure of their crops from a prolonged drouth in the summer, which had also driven all the big game on the neighbouring prairies northward in search of pasture. During the winter Dickson generously distributed among them his whole stock of provisions and clothing, thus preserving the lives of many, and greatly strengthening his hold upon their affections. A great many of the people of the plains, however, had perished miserably from want. Red Thunder, a principal chief of the Sioux, living near the Missouri River, while on his way to Prairie du Chien early in the spring of 1812, discovered that six entire lodges of his nation had died from hunger and cold, and no trace could be found of forty-five others. The starving wretches had been subsisting upon roots, and had even attempted to prolong life by grinding up for food the dry bones of buffalo which had been lying upon the plains for years.²

It was not until the 18th of June, when Dickson was at the portage between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers on his return journey to Montreal, that he was overtaken by two men employed as express messengers by Capt J. B. Glegg, Military Secretary to General Brock, who carried a letter from him, dated at York on the 27th of February, stating that war with the United States seemed inevitable, and desiring information as to the assistance he might be able to furnish in that event. Francis Rheame, of Malden, and his companion, who had been entrusted with this important mission, had been upwards of three months on the road, during which they had travelled more than two thousand miles seeking him without success in many parts of the west. At Chicago they had been detained and searched by direction of the officer in command of the military post. They had taken the precaution to secrete their letters between the soles of their moccasins, and, as nothing was found

¹ Bradbury, *Travels*, p. 25.

² Dickson Memorial, 3rd December, 1812; Glegg to Prevost, 11th November, 1812.

upon them, they were liberated, and allowed to proceed.¹ A chosen band of thirty Menomonees, under the chief Weenusate, was sent off at once to Amherstburg to obtain a supply of ammunition, and in reply to Glegg's letter Dickson stated that the remainder of his "friends," numbering 250 or 300, speaking several languages, were ready to march under proper officers duly commissioned for the purpose, and would assemble at the Island of St. Joseph about the 30th of June. Punctually to the day he arrived there accompanied by about three hundred Sioux, Winnebagoes (Puants), and Menomonees (Folles Avaines), led by their principal chiefs. The British garrison consisted of a sergeant and two gunners of the Royal Artillery and three officers and forty-one non-commissioned officers and privates of the 10th Royal Veteran Battalion, mostly old and infirm men who were scarcely fit for field service. Captain Charles Roberts of the latter corps, who was likewise in poor health, was in command. The post there was described as "a square consisting merely of high cedar pickets to enclose the block-house and public buildings, the whole in bad repair and incapable of any defence." It was armed with four very old six pounders, which were honey-combed and nearly useless, and six small swivels. On the 3rd of July, Mr. Toussaint Pothier, agent of the Southwest Fur Company, arrived from Montreal. Five days later a special messenger came from Brock at York bringing the first information of the declaration of war, with instructions to Roberts to make an attack on Mackinac as soon as practicable. Steps were immediately taken to assemble the *voyageurs* in the employment of the fur companies from all their trading stations on the mainland as far west as Sault Ste. Marie, and messengers were even despatched to distant Fort William to require the agents of the Northwest Fur Company to send down their whole available force from that place. They promptly responded to the call, but arrived too late to take part in the expedition. "These gentlemen with great alacrity came down with a strong party to co-operate," Pothier wrote, "bringing to Ste. Marie several carriage guns and other arms, and although the distance between St. Joseph's and Fort William is about 500 miles, they arrived at Michilimackinac the ninth day from the date of the express and found us in peaceable possession."²

About the 12th of July a second express arrived with instructions from General Brock to suspend offensive operations until further orders were received, but the work of organization was continued without inter-

¹ Federal Republican of Baltimore, 25th September, 1812. Letter from a gentleman in Illinois.

² Pothier to Prevost, 8th September, 1812, Can. Arch., C 677, p. 70; Bibaud, Histoire du Canada; Coffin, War.

mission. One hundred and fifty *voyageurs* were enrolled as volunteers, and organized into a provisional battalion, of which Lewis Crawford was appointed to act as Lieut.-Colonel in command, with Toussaint Pothier as Major and Robert Livingston as Adjutant. Roberts, however, was not in a position to equip this force, "having but forty guns in the Indian store and no gunpowder but what was required for the great guns of the garrison, and ball cartridge for his men only; in short, the garrison was deficient in everything necessary for such an undertaking."¹ In this dilemma, he applied to Pothier, who placed the stores of the Southwest Company at his disposal without hesitation, and the brig *Caledonia*, belonging to the Northwest Company, was fortunately intercepted on her way down the lake from Sault Ste. Marie and pressed into service. The next step was to secure the good will, if not the active co-operation of the powerful band of Ottawas residing at L'Arbre Croche on the mainland within sight of Mackinac. It was still "a subject of much speculation how these people would act." In dealing with them he found a highly useful ally in the person of Amable Chevalier, the half-breed son of Louis Chevalier, a well known and very influential French Canadian trader among the Ottawas. He was born and had grown to manhood in the village of L'Arbre Croche, but for some years past had resided at the Lake of Two Mountains near Montreal, whence he had returned to the "Upper Country" the autumn before to hunt during the winter. His influence among his mother's people, by whom he was recognized as a chief, was considerable, and he put forth every effort to engage them on the side of the British, to whom he was sincerely attached. On the 12th of July most of their chiefs assembled at St. Joseph's, and reported that no reinforcements had arrived at Mackinac when they passed the island the day before. Roberts at once held a council, at which he announced his intention of attacking the American post, and after a long private consultation among themselves, and "much prevarication," they agreed to join him, and returned to their villages to assemble and arm their warriors. Even then Chevalier confessed that "he never could bring himself to have confidence in their fidelity."

Soon after, another express arrived from Brock with orders to "adopt the most prudent measures, either of offence or defence, that circumstances might point out," and being informed that reinforcements were daily expected by the garrison at Mackinac, Roberts determined to attack at once. By this time he had assembled 230 Canadians and 320 Indians, including only about thirty Ottawas. Chevalier was

¹ Pothier to Prevost, 8th September, 1812.

accordingly despatched to collect as many more of that nation as possible and join the expedition on its approach to the island of Mackinac. At 10 o'clock on the morning of the 16th, the whole of the regulars with two heavy iron six-pounder guns were embarked on the *Caledonia*, and that vessel set sail accompanied by a flotilla of ten *batteaux* and seventy bark canoes, containing one hundred and fifty *voyageurs* and three hundred Indians, of whom many were unarmed. The remainder of the *voyageurs* and Indians were left as a garrison at St. Joseph's. The lake was calm and the voyage uneventful until midnight, when a canoe was seen approaching in the moonlight, paddled by a single person who attempted flight but was soon overtaken. The prisoner proved to be Michael Dousman, captain of an American militia company on the island of Mackinac, who had been sent out to reconnoitre by the commandant, whose suspicions had been aroused by the evident coolness of Indians lately professing the utmost friendship. During the day a rumour reached him that a force was being assembled at St. Joseph's, and, although he had received no intimation of the declaration of war, he determined to despatch a confidential agent to ascertain its truth, and after consulting with the principal residents, Dousman was selected to perform this service.

The expedition then pushed forward with redoubled speed, as it was apparent that there was no time to be lost. "By the unparalleled exertions of the Canadians," Captain Roberts reported, "we arrived at the place of *rendezvous* at three o'clock the following morning." The Ottawas were nowhere to be seen, but a landing was effected at once on the west side of the island about two miles from the fort, and Dousman was liberated, after giving a promise not to communicate with the garrison and instructed to invite the inhabitants of the village to come at once to that place, where they could be placed under the protection of a guard of regular soldiers. The Canadians were set at work cutting a road across the island, over which the two rather unwieldy iron guns they had brought with them were laboriously hauled to the brow of the bluff, completely commanding and overlooking the fort at a distance of about seven hundred yards with a sheer fall of one hundred feet, while Dickson and Askin with the Indians occupied the woods and covered these operations.

This work, which was situated near the edge of a cliff rising precipitously from the lake, was a quadrangular stockade of cedar pickets twelve or fourteen feet in height, enclosing nearly two acres of ground, with blockhouses at each angle and surrounded by a ditch. Seven guns were mounted in the blockhouses, but the garrison numbered only three officers and sixty-one men of the 1st Regiment of United States

Artillery. This might have been increased to about two hundred by the militia of the settlement and the crews of the vessels lying in the harbour. But the garrison was wholly unprepared for resistance, as the first intimation of danger was received from the surgeon, who saw the inhabitants hurriedly quitting their dwellings under Dousman's directions as he passed through the village. About nine o'clock in the morning the first gun was placed in position on the crest of the ridge commanding the stockade and Indians were seen in considerable numbers in the skirts of the woods. Two hours later, an officer bearing a flag of truce, accompanied by three American traders who had been made prisoners, presented himself at the gate of the fort and demanded its immediate surrender. The prisoners assured Lieut. Hanks that the force they had seen numbered nearly a thousand men provided with artillery and scaling ladders, and that a powerful reinforcement of Indians was expected to join them at any moment. They urged him to surrender without waiting for an assault and thus preserve the lives of the garrison and other inmates of the fort, as resistance appeared hopeless. After a brief consultation with his officers and some leading civilians, Hanks consented to do this, and articles of capitulation were accordingly drawn up, by which it was arranged that the garrison should march out with the honours of war and be sent to Detroit on parole until regularly exchanged, and all citizens of the United States who declined to take the oath of allegiance to the King should be at liberty to leave the island with their property within a month. By a supplementary article it was arranged that the crews of nine small vessels in the harbour should become prisoners of war, thus increasing the number to one hundred and ten. A considerable quantity of military stores was found in the fort.¹

During the negotiations with the garrison, the Indians were kept so well under control that Roberts himself was agreeably surprised. "It is a circumstance, I believe, without precedent," he wrote, "and demands the greatest praise for all those who conducted the Indians, that though these people's minds were much heated, yet as soon as they heard the capitulation was signed they all returned to their canoes, and

¹ Return of ordnance taken, enclosed in a letter from Prevost to Bathurst, 20th March, 1813. Brass guns, two 5½ inch howitzers, two six pounders, one three pounder. Iron guns—two nine inch pounders. Shells—5½ inch fixed 18, unfixed 374; case shot, 5½ inch, 65; round shot, 9 pounder, 480; case shot, 6 pounder, fixed 50; unfixed, 60; round shot, 864; grape, 18; fixed round shot, 80; case shot, 3 pounder, 51; round shot, fixed, 37; grape, 23; loose round shot, 463; muskets, 179; rifles, 6. Two of these guns had been surrendered at Yorktown.

not a drop of either man's or animal's blood was spilt till I gave an order for a certain number of bullocks to be purchased for them."¹

Learning that two other trading vessels were supposed to be at Chicago, Lieut. Joseph Lambeth of the Veteran Battalion was despatched with a party of men in boats to look for them, and on the 20th and 21st they were taken by him on their way down from Lake Michigan, laden with seven hundred bales of valuable furs, the result of a year's trading by the 'American Fur Company.'²

As the Ottawas from L'Arbre Croche had failed to join Roberts, on the second day after the surrender a messenger was sent to inform them of his success and invite them to share in a general distribution of presents, when they immediately came over alleging bad weather as the cause of their delay. Amable Chevalier, however, assured him that it actually arose from "indecision on their part while the conquest remained in doubt and unknown to them and a predilection in favour of the Americans."³ Eight or nine hundred assembled in a few days, but information of General Hull's invasion of Canada greatly damped their ardour, and many of them returned to their villages to await the result.

There can be no doubt that the fall of Mackinac greatly increased Hull's embarrassment, and he lost no time in urging that a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men from Kentucky and five hundred from Ohio should be marched to support him as soon as they could be organized and equipped by the State authorities without awaiting for a requisition from the Secretary of War. He asserted that the Canadian Fur Companies would make every effort to reopen the Detroit River as the most convenient channel of transportation for their supplies for the coming winter, and it was the opinion of the officers and traders from Mackinac that two or three thousand Indians and *engagés* could easily be assembled by them for that purpose.

A letter from Mr. McKenzie, the factor at Fort William, to Angus Mackintosh, of Moy, had lately fallen into his hands, relating probably with some exaggeration the successful efforts made by the agents of the Northwest Company at that place to raise a force for the attack of Mackinac and asserting their ability to muster five thousand men if necessary. Hull had also been informed that despatches announcing the capture of Mackinac had been received at Amherstburg and that a message demanding assistance had been sent in return.⁴

¹ Roberts to Brock, 17th July, 1812, Can. Arch., C 676, p. 232.

² Lambeth to Prevost, 2nd June, 1814, Can. Arch., C 231, p. 75.

³ Pothier to Prevost, 8th September, 1812.

⁴ Hull, Defence, pp. 64-7.

A bolder commander would probably have attempted to extricate himself from his difficult position by an assault upon Amherstburg, but Hull shrank from this as certainly entailing serious loss with but a doubtful prospect of success. Little progress had yet been made in the preparations for a regular siege, although work had been begun upon three floating batteries. A week of extremely warm weather had been succeeded by storms of rain and hail, turning unusually cold at night. Combined with the unsanitary state of the camp, this caused much sickness. The principal medical officer died, and the chief engineer fell seriously ill. A disposition to grumble and find fault had become apparent among the volunteers, which their officers were inclined to encourage rather than repress.

On the same day that the fall of Mackinac became known to General Hull, Colonel Henry Procter of the 41st Regiment arrived at Amherstburg from Long Point in an open boat, having been much delayed by windy weather. As senior in rank he at once superseded St. George in command of the district. The number of militia under arms had steadily diminished until it did not much exceed three hundred, although many of the absentees promised to return after harvest. In the 1st Essex Regiment, three officers were reported absent without leave and two as deserters.¹ He found that the "arts and misrepresentations" of the enemy had made a strong impression upon the minds of the Indians, of whom only about two hundred remained. Of the militia three hundred and sixty had actually claimed protection from General Hull before returning to their homes.² Watson and Westbrook had conducted a patrol of mounted men up the Thames as far as Westminster, vowing vengeance against "the first characters in the Province,"³ while Hull's address to the Six Nations had been communicated to them in some mysterious way with marked effect. But the small body of regulars remained in good spirits and Procter reported that he did not consider that Amherstburg was in any immediate danger and felt confident that the arrival of five hundred of the 41st Regiment would speedily decide the contest in his favour. While retaining the *Queen Charlotte* to secure the navigation of the river, he determined to despatch the *Hunter* and *Nancy* to Fort Erie to bring up any available reinforcement that might be spared from that quarter. Greatly encouraged by the news of the capture of Mackinac he lost no time in reopening negotiations with the Wyandots of Brownstown, who enjoyed the reputation of being the most intelligent, enterprising and courageous

¹ Return, 26th July, 1812; Woodbridge Papers.

² Evidence of Colonel Joseph Watson, Hull's Trial, p. 151.

³ Brock to Prevost, 26th July; Procter to Brock, 26th July.

of the western nations. Many of them were Christians and had attained a considerable degree of civilization. Colonel Elliott was now instructed to invite them to cross the river and place themselves under British protection; and with this object in view a chief named Warrow was sent over to propose a conference. By this time a deputation from the Six Nations had returned from the council at Piqua. They had also visited Richardville, an aged chief of the Miamis at Fort Wayne, and delivered to him a pipe of peace from General Hull, receiving in return pipes to be used in a council with Tecumseh and Roundhead. They were now accompanied to the Council House at Amherstburg by Walk-in-the-Water and most of the principal chiefs and warriors of the Wyandots of Brownstown. Tarhe, or the Crane, the Half-King of Sandusky, who was now very old and had become an obsequious pensioner of the American government, remained behind to await the result. Procter and Elliott with several officers of the garrison and Indian Department were assembled to meet them. Walk-in-the-Water spoke at length, dwelling much upon the number and power of the Americans and reproaching the British for their conduct during the last war, when he said that the gates of their fort had been closed against the Indians in the hour of defeat, and declaring his intention to take no part in the contest. Roundhead replied with vigour, urging his brethren to join the British at once and he was warmly supported by Warrow and also by Splitlog, an influential chief of the Brownstown band. Finally the pipe of peace was formally lit by one of the Wyandots and presented to Tecumseh, who immediately broke the stem and, dashing the fragments upon the floor, left the room with every sign of violent indignation. When the council reassembled Tecumseh addressed it with tremendous energy, bitterly denouncing the Wyandots of Brownstown as cowards for refusing to join the British, and again broke the pipe of peace when it was tendered to him. This scene was re-enacted on the third day with evident effect, and upon the fourth a considerable number of Wyandots of Walk-in-the-Water's band announced their intention of joining their Canadian brethren. Elliott then replied, expressing his pleasure at their decision, adding significantly that he must bring his friend, Walk-in-the-Water, to that side of the river where he would be under his own eye. The council then broke up, the Wyandots of Brownstown returning to their own village, and Tarhe hurriedly took his departure to Sandusky to avoid being made a prisoner.¹

¹ Clarke, History of the Wyandots; North American Review, April, 1827, Article by Lewis Cass.

During this time the boats of the *Queen Charlotte* continued to patrol the river nearly as high as Sandwich, and on the night of the 1st of August took possession of a raft which had been partly fitted up as a floating battery and had got adrift. General Hull had announced his intention of securing his line of communication with the Miami River by a chain of blockhouses about ten miles apart. The first of these was commenced at the Rivière aux Ecorces, and orders were given for the construction of others at Brownstown and River Raisin.

No time was therefore to be lost in effecting the removal of the Wyandots, and on the night of the 2nd of August Captain Muir with one hundred men of the 41st, a detachment of Essex militia under Captain Caldwell, and nearly two hundred Indians led by Tecumseh and Roundhead crossed the river under cover of the guns of the *Queen Charlotte* and surrounded the village of Brownstown. They found its inhabitants in a great state of alarm and excitement. Mounted patrols from Detroit had been riding about all day and some of the Indians who had decided to remain neutral had already taken to the woods. The remainder, with their families, household effects and cattle, were at once removed to Amherstburg, while Tecumseh and Captains Elliott and Livingston with a picked band of about forty warriors remained behind to interrupt the communication between Detroit and the River Raisin, where the 2nd Regiment of Michigan militia was being assembled. Next morning the mail was intercepted on its way to Detroit and its escort killed or taken.

When the defection of the Wyandots was reported to General Hull he is said to have turned pale and displayed signs of violent agitation.¹ He had distributed presents among them and seems to have entertained little suspicion of their good faith. When he saw them arrayed in arms against him, he felt that his troops were actually in a critical position and that not only the advance of reinforcements and the movements of supplies from Ohio might be seriously impeded, but that his own retreat might eventually be endangered. Already he began to contemplate the withdrawal of the troops at Sandwich, but when this proposal was discussed at a meeting of the principal officers, many of them still declared themselves strongly in favour of an advance against Amherstburg. But as the bridges over Turkey Creek and the Canard River had both been destroyed, the artillery officers stated that it would be difficult to move the siege artillery by land, and it was then decided by the vote of Quartermaster-General Taylor to await the completion

¹ McKenney, *Tour to the Great Lakes*, p. 121.

of the floating batteries by means of which it was expected that the *Queen Charlotte* would be driven from her position and the guns might be landed near the British works. It was not anticipated that this would entail a further delay of more than two or three days. Orders were accordingly issued on the 4th of August to prepare for an immediate advance. But in his letter of the same date to the Secretary of War, General Hull exhibited fatal irresolution.

"Circumstances, however, may render it necessary to recross the river with the main body of the army to preserve the communication for the purpose of obtaining supplies from Ohio," he wrote. "I am constantly obliged to make a strong detachment to convoy the provisions between the foot of the Rapids and Detroit. If nothing should be done at Niagara and the force should come from the north and east, as is almost certain, you must be sensible of the difficulties which will attend my situation. I can promise nothing but my best and most faithful exertions to promote the honour of the army, and the interest of my country."¹

On that day he had received Lieutenant Hanks's official account of the capture of Mackinac and information leading him to believe that messengers had been despatched from Amherstburg to that post to demand immediate assistance. Watson had returned from his raid up the Thames with information that Major Chambers with fifty regular soldiers and four pieces of artillery had arrived at Delaware where he was endeavouring to assemble a body of militia and Indians numbering five or six hundred. All communication with the River Raisin had been cut off for the last three days and a considerable body of hostile Indians was reported in possession of Brownstown.²

A supply column was known to be upon the road from Ohio approaching the River Raisin. Major Van Horne of Findlay's regiment was accordingly detailed with one hundred and fifty men of that corps to escort the mail from Detroit to the River Raisin and return with the convoy. He was also directed to take with him all the Ohio militia who had refused to cross into Canada, about a hundred in number. During the day a report reached the American camp at Sandwich that a British scouting party had crossed Turkey Creek, and McCullough's rangers were sent out to gain information. It was ascertained that some cattle had been driven off the day before and some mounted patrols were seen at a distance. On his return McCullough asked permission to join Van Horne's force, which he was allowed to do with three of

¹ Hull to Eustis, 4th August, 1812; Forbes, *Trial*, Appendix II, p. 11.

² Letter in Poulson's *American*, August, 1812.

his men, all of them being mounted. Van Horne marched that day as far as the Rivière aux Ecorces, a distance of eleven miles, and bivouacked. Trails in the grass next morning indicated that their encampment had been reconnoitred by Indians during the night. The weather was fair and clear, but a heavy fog hung over the river, which prevented objects from being seen upon it, although the sound of oars could be distinctly heard. The march was resumed at an early hour with the mounted rangers riding some distance in advance. On passing through the small Indian village at Maguaga it was found to be entirely deserted by its inhabitants and the houses emptied of their contents. Some distance further on, the road forked at a place known as the Big Apple Tree, where there was a field of well grown corn in the fork. Here the rangers separated, Captain McCullough and a negro taking the road on the left which led down near the river, while the remainder, followed by the advance guard and main body, advanced along the other. A few minutes later several shots were heard, and a party of Indians rushing from the high corn ran across the road between the main body and rear guard firing upon them as they went, and escaped into the woods. When the column recovered from the confusion caused by this incident, it was discovered that McCullough and his companion had both been killed and that the former had been scalped. The bodies were removed to a house in the village, where they were concealed. While this was being done the column came to a halt and was overtaken by a detachment of cavalry escorting the mail from Detroit, accompanied by some mounted civilians on their way to the River Raisin, and a French inhabitant informed them that a body of Indians was lying in ambush at Brownstown. A new formation was then adopted, in two parallel columns, each headed by three horsemen marching in file about one hundred yards apart, leaving the road clear for the mail and packhorses carrying supplies. The advance guard was composed of twenty-four riflemen under Ensign Roby. Two companies of riflemen and four of infantry formed the main body, and another company of infantry and the remainder of the cavalry followed in the rear. In this order they moved forward very slowly and cautiously for four or five miles. Van Horne had been advised to take a by-road on the right and thus avoid passing through the village of Brownstown, but failed to obtain any information that would justify him in leaving a well-known route.¹ Meanwhile, Tecumseh and Elliott with forty Shawnee and Ottawa warriors lay in wait for them at the crossing of a miry creek near the village of Brownstown. Here the road followed the left bank of the creek for some distance before reach-

¹ Lucas, Journal, pp. 394-8; Walker's Journal, p. 58.

ing the ford and was commanded by higher ground on the opposite side closely overgrown by thickets. The flat on the left of the road had been planted with Indian corn, then five or six feet in height, but interspersed with thickets and clumps of trees. The ford was muddy and difficult, and in approaching it the columns were obliged to close together until they were only a few yards apart. It was an ideal place for an ambuscade, and the Indians were absolutely hidden from sight in the tall corn and thickets on both sides of the road and in front in a position to maintain a converging fire upon the column. At the first volley most of the mounted men in front and several officers were killed or wounded or unhorsed. Frightened horses plunged madly through the column throwing it into hopeless confusion. The musketry from his hidden assailants was so incessant and effective and their yells so shrill and vehement on both sides of the road that Van Horne believed he was attacked by a far superior force and hastily ordered a retreat which soon became a flight. The mounted escort threw away the mail bags, abandoned the packhorses and galloped off, followed by many of the infantry at so fast a pace that they completely outran a small party of Indians who attempted to intercept them. The pursuit was continued for about three miles, the fugitives scarcely firing a shot in defence. Many left the road and hid themselves in the woods. Eighteen were killed, among them being no less than seven officers, and twelve were wounded but made their escape. Next day seventy were still reported missing, but a good many of these subsequently made their way to Detroit. One young Shawnee was killed and two Chippewas were wounded. Two unfortunate Americans were captured and deliberately slaughtered some hours later by the comrades of the slain Shawnee. Many arms and accoutrements were left on the field, but the most valuable prize was the mail, which was found to contain a variety of letters from persons of all ranks in the American army revealing much discontent and want of confidence in their officers and that sickness was prevalent. A copy of General Hull's despatch to the Secretary of War of the 4th of August, which thoroughly disclosed his embarrassment and vacillation of mind, was also taken. Doubt, hesitation, and apprehension plainly dominated his mind and he frankly confessed that the situation of his army was critical. His plans for future operation were completely exposed. Another interesting document was a letter from Captain McCullough to his wife describing his exploit of killing and scalping an Indian at the River Canard, which has been already noticed.¹

¹ Richardson, Operations, Right Division; Montreal Gazette, 1812; Procter to Brock, 11th August, 1812; Prevost to Bathurst, 24th August, 1812.

The remnant of Van Horne's command rallied at the Rivière aux Ecorces, where the wounded were despatched to Detroit by water. Continuing his retreat he met Major Snelling with a detachment of the 4th United States Infantry at Spring Wells advancing to his support, but the whole force returned that night to Detroit, spreading alarm among the garrison and inhabitants by greatly exaggerated accounts of the number of Indians by whom they had been ambushed. Hull himself was so much impressed by this unexpected disaster that he became convinced that not even the capture of Amherstburg would save him from eventual ruin unless his communication with Ohio could be reopened.¹ Next day McArthur and Cass offered to proceed with their regiments to the scene of the action to bring in the dead, but his confidence in the efficiency of these troops had been so seriously shaken by recent events, that he declined to grant them permission.² From this time forward both these officers displayed a strong disposition to criticize his actions unfavourably at every opportunity. Hull's anxiety for his communications was increased by a letter from Lieut.-Colonel John Anderson who had assembled the 2nd Regiment of Michigan militia at the River Raisin, with the exception of one company stationed at the Miami. He reported that a number of persons had been killed or made prisoners by Indians near the Huron River, and that the mail had been taken on its way to Detroit. His command had but a small supply of ammunition and was greatly dispirited. Numbers of Indians had been seen on their way to Amherstburg, and he feared the worst unless quickly reinforced.³

On the other hand, Sergeant Forbush of the 4th United States Infantry, who was a prisoner at Amherstburg, had contrived to transmit a letter to the captain of his company, informing him that the garrison of that place was extremely weak, and that on the night of the 1st of August the prisoners alone might have taken it, as the whole of the regular troops except a sergeant's guard had crossed the river.⁴

The commanding officers of corps were again assembled, and after considerable discussion, declared in favour of an immediate offensive movement, and Hull announced that in deference to their opinion he would direct an advance. Orders were accordingly issued directing all men on fatigue duty to rejoin their regiments. Three days' rations were drawn on August 7th, which the men were instructed to cook for a movement next day.

¹ Defence, p. 80.

² Lucas, Journal, p. 400.

³ Anderson to Hull, August 4th, 1812.

⁴ Walker's Journal, pp. 56-8.

Before nightfall, however, Hull received letters from Generals Hall and Porter at Buffalo, warning him that boats filled with troops had been seen some days before crossing Lake Ontario from York to Burlington, and that some of the British regulars on the Niagara had also moved westward by water. Watson again returned from the Thames with information that General Brock was embarking troops at Fort Erie. Hull then stated his intention of leaving an adequate garrison in the redoubt and withdrawing the remainder of his force from Sandwich to Detroit. Colonel McArthur, senior officer of the Ohio Volunteers, was selected for the command of the garrison of this work, which was to consist of his own regiment, but that officer stoutly objected, even accusing his superior of a design to sacrifice him with the deliberate intention of provoking the latter to place him under arrest. Hull kept his temper under circumstances of great provocation, and substituted Major Denny, detailing as a garrison for the redoubt twenty artillery men with two guns, one company of the 4th United States Infantry and two hundred Ohio Volunteers, being mostly men considered unfit for field service.¹ The passage of the river occupied the greater part of the night as there was considerable disorder and insubordination. Next day Lieut.-Colonel Miller was placed in command of a picked force detailed to re-open the communication and escort the convoy of supplies from the River Raisin to Detroit. It consisted of a detachment of artillery with a howitzer and six pounder field gun, Sloan's troop of Ohio Dragoons, a detachment of the 1st and all the effective men of the 4th United States Infantry, one company from each of the Ohio regiments, and one from the Michigan Legion, numbering in all 650 officers and men.² Advancing to the River Rouge that night, Miller crossed it in boats early next morning and resumed his march, the cavalry, artillery and supply waggons moving upon the road, while the infantry marched in parallel columns on either side protected by flank guards of riflemen. His progress was so slow and circum-spect that it was three o'clock in the afternoon before his advance reached Maguaga, only fourteen miles from Detroit. The movement had been observed by Tecumseh's scouts early in the day and reported to Procter at Amherstburg, who promptly ordered Captain Adam Muir of the 41st Regiment to cross the river with a detachment which would increase the number of troops at Brownstown to ninety rank and file, half of whom were soldiers of the 41st, and the remainder volunteers from the Essex militia commanded by Captains Caldwell and Elliott.

¹ Hull, *Defence*, pp. 53-70; James Foster, *The Capitulation*.

² Lucas, *Journal*, p. 401; Walker's *Journal*, pp. 59-61.

Muir was a veteran of thirty years' service and tried courage who had risen from the ranks to be sergeant-major and eventually adjutant of his regiment.

Upon landing he was joined by Tecumseh and Walk-in-the-Water at the head of 130 Hurons and Shawnees, and Colonel Caldwell with 70 Western Indians, chiefly Ottawas and Pottawatomies. Instead of awaiting the attack at the creek near Brownstown, where Van Horne had been so successfully ambushed, they moved forward into the comparatively open ground in the oak woods near Maguaga. Here they selected a position behind a slight ridge which intersected the road nearly at right angles and began to form a hasty intrenchment of fallen timber. While so engaged they were reinforced by Lieutenant Richard Bullock with sixty picked men of the 41st, who had arrived that morning from Fort Erie in the *Hunter*, and were at once sent forward to support Muir. The centre of the position on either side of the road was occupied by the 41st with a detachment of the Essex militia on its flanks, an open space in front affording them a clear field of fire of sixty or eighty yards. Caldwell's Indians on the right were extended across a hollow into a cornfield. Between this field and the river there was a strip of woodland which was entirely unoccupied for the want of a sufficient force. The Indians commanded by Tecumseh and Walk-in-the-Water were extended on the left, sending forward a small party to occupy a tract of woods in front and gain information of the enemy's approach.¹ Near the deserted Indian village of Maguaga some of these scouts fired upon the American advance guard, killing a man of the Michigan Legion and wounding another. The entire column instantly deployed into line and advanced a considerable distance without encountering any opposition, when the column of march was again formed. An hour later the action was begun by Tecumseh's advanced party firing upon the horsemen which headed the column from both sides of the road with such effect that a general deployment took place and the guns were ordered to clear the woods. The howitzer was almost immediately disabled by the horses running away and dashing a wheel of its carriage to pieces against the trunk of a tree. The field piece opened fire and musketry became general along their line. At the first discharge of this gun Lieutenant-Colonel Miller was thrown from his horse and badly bruised.² After the lapse of some minutes he remounted, and ordered a general advance with fixed bayonets, by which the Indians engaged were driven back upon the main position,

¹ Richardson, War of 1812, pp. 34-8; Dalliba, Narrative.

² Lucas, Journal, pp. 401-2; Walker's Journal, pp. 59-61.

retiring from tree to tree at full speed. In effecting their retreat some of them were mistaken for the enemy by men of the 41st, who opened fire upon them which was as quickly returned, thereby causing momentary confusion. When the American line actually came into the open ground it was, however, instantly checked by a succession of heavy volleys, the 41st being protected by their extemporized breastworks and the Indians and militia springing from their cover to deliver their fire and instantly disappearing again. After the contest had continued in this manner for about half an hour, Miller directed Major Morrison commanding the Michigan Legion and a company of Ohio militia on his left to turn the right of the British position, while Major Van Horne was to attempt a similar movement on the other flank. Guided by Captain Dequindre of the former corps, who was familiar with the ground, Morrison succeeded in gradually working his way into the woods between the cornfield and the river, having his horse killed and losing some men in the operation. By this time the regular infantry had advanced across the cleared ground in front under cover of the smoke until they were within twenty-five or thirty paces of the British position, where they prepared for a charge.¹ At this moment Captain Muir, who was standing immediately behind Lieut. Sutherland of the 41st, saw an American soldier in the act of taking deliberate aim at them; and hastily placing his musket upon his companion's shoulder, he fired at this man, who instantly fell dead, while the bullet from his rifle wounded Sutherland in the cheek and neck and passed through the brass ornament on Muir's shoulder. Another shot soon after wounded the latter officer in the leg, and, finding that his position was being turned in such a manner as to endanger his retreat to his boats, he gave the order to retire by sound of the bugle. This was done at the double in considerable disorder and with some loss until they gained the crest of another ridge commanding a bridge over a small stream, where the men were rallied and again formed in line. Tecumseh on the left had made a wide extension in the woods in the hope of out-flanking the Americans in that direction, but then discovered that his own right was being turned and was accordingly forced to retire in a westerly direction, warmly pursued by Major Van Horne with his detachment of Ohio riflemen. He skilfully withdrew from one position after another in the expectation of eventually leading them into an ambush, but warned by his recent disaster, Van Horne succeeded in keeping his men well in hand and restraining them from following far into the woods. The sound of firing in this quarter led Muir to believe that his left

¹ Lucas; Walker.

flank had been turned, and finding that he was separated from the main body of the Indians, he once more gave orders for a retreat which was accomplished without molestation, to his boats in which he embarked and recrossed the river. Three privates of the 41st were killed in this affair, and two officers and thirteen men wounded, two of the latter being left on the field and taken prisoners. Lieutenant Robert Livingston of the Mackinac Volunteers, who led a party of Western Indians, was also badly wounded and taken, and the Indians reported a total loss of two killed and six wounded, among the latter being Tecumseh himself, who was slightly injured in the neck by a buckshot.¹

Miller ordered his cavalry to charge along the road in pursuit, but Captain Sloan failed to obey, and when he succeeded in reforming his infantry for a fresh advance, his enemy had disappeared. A strong patrol was sent forward as far as the village of Brownstown, which they found deserted, and saw a number of boats filled with troops recrossing the river. His loss had been quite severe. In their frontal attack his regular infantry had lost ten killed, and four officers and forty-one men wounded. The Ohio and Michigan Volunteers, who were less exposed, lost eight killed and two officers and eleven men wounded. During the action all of his men had thrown aside their haversacks, containing two days' provisions, few of which were recovered before it became dark, as Miller would not permit them to straggle but encamped for the night in order of battle. Heavy rain soon began to fall, which continued without intermission until morning. When daylight returned his men were too much exhausted by their exertions, combined with loss of sleep and hunger, to resume their march, and he was himself prostrated by an attack of fever and ague brought on by exposure. The road had become heavy, and an officer was sent back to request reinforcements and a supply of provisions before advancing further. The dead were buried and an Indian cabin burned to conceal the graves, and a patrol went out to search for a missing man whose body was found in the woods. While thus engaged, one of the party was shot dead by a wounded Indian who lay disabled on the field, having had a leg and an arm broken in the action, but managed to discharge his musket with fatal effect. This unfortunate fellow was at once put to death by the Americans, who were much impressed by his fierce and undaunted bearing.²

During the day some troops from Amherstburg landed upon Grosse Isle with a howitzer, and began throwing shells in the direction of the

¹ Dalliba, Narrative; Richardson, Right Division; Coffin, War; Brown: McAfee; Proctor to Brock, 11th August, 1812.

² Walker's Journal, pp. 59-61.

American camp. In the afternoon Colonel McArthur arrived in boats from Detroit with a supply of provisions, escorted by one hundred men of his regiment. Colonel Godefroi followed by land with two companies of Michigan militia to remove the wounded to Detroit. When the provisions had been landed the wounded were embarked in these boats, which slowly began to ascend the river. This movement was observed by the party upon Grosse Isle, and in response to their signals, the *Hunter* weighed anchor and came around the upper end of the island, where she lay across the channel to intercept them and began firing upon the Michigan militia who were then marching through the village of Maguaga. McArthur landed the wounded, which were removed in waggons, and abandoned his boats, eleven in number, which were taken by the *Hunter*. While on the march to rejoin Miller, McArthur's force was harassed by a party of western Indians concealed in the woods, and the escort with the wounded was fired upon by a gunboat lying off the mouth of the Rivière aux Ecorces. Boats were observed crossing the river from Amherstburg to Brownstown, and messengers were sent off to Detroit to request a further reinforcement. At sunset peremptory orders arrived from Hull directing Miller to abandon the expedition and return at once. Large fires were built up to give the impression that he intended to remain encamped for the night, and at midnight the retreat was begun under very unfavourable circumstances as the night was dark and the roads heavy with mud. Many of his men lost their shoes and were quite exhausted by daybreak when they reached the Rivière aux Ecorces, but greatly relieved because they had not been attacked on the march. After halting here for some hours, the column arrived at Detroit about noon on August 12th, thoroughly fatigued and dispirited, although some of the men boastfully carried fresh scalps upon the points of their bayonets. Greatly to their surprise they discovered a British force in possession of Sandwich and busily engaged in throwing up batteries.¹

By this time Hull had learned that a reinforcement from Fort Erie had arrived at Amherstburg, which was reported to consist of four hundred men and that a party of dragoons had appeared at Allen's Mills, in the township of Delaware, where they had captured two of Watson's scouts. Major Denny was ordered to destroy the redoubt at Sandwich and recross the river that night. When it became dark the guns were removed and the stockade was set on fire. The flames soon spread to Gowie's house, which was also consumed. A British patrol entered the village a few hours later. Hull even proposed to abandon

¹ Lucas, Journal, pp. 401-4; Walker's Journal, pp. 62-3.

Detroit altogether before his position became worse, and retreat to the Miami, where he hoped to be able to maintain his army until relieved; but upon suggesting this to Colonel Cass, that officer remarked that if he did this, the Ohio regiments would desert to a man and return to their homes.¹ He then wrote to Governor Scott of Kentucky, to Governor Meigs and to Colonel Samuel Wells of the 17th United States Infantry, urging them in the strongest terms to despatch troops to his assistance without further delay. To the latter officer he wrote:—

“The fall of Michilimackinac and the tardy operations of our army at Niagara, and almost all the Indians having become hostile, have totally changed the prospects of this army; my communication is almost entirely cut off; there are but small quantities of provisions, and the most fatal consequences must ensue unless the communication is soon reopened and very strong reinforcements arrive.”²

As soon as General Brock became aware of the declaration of war he established his headquarters at Fort George. A letter from Colonel St. George, dated July 15th, reached him here on the 20th, giving him the first reliable information of the invasion, and also enclosing a copy of General Hull’s proclamation and a return of his force captured in the schooner *Cuyahoga Packet*... The misconduct of the militia and St. George’s evident irresolution caused him to despatch Colonel Henry Procter of the 41st Regiment, a more self-reliant and energetic officer, to take over the command. Unless he succeeded in holding the line of the Canard River, the speedy fall of Amherstburg and the movement of a strong force of the enemy up the Thames must be anticipated. The prospect seemed decidedly discouraging.

“Were it possible to animate the militia to a proper sense of their duty,” he wrote to the Governor-General: “something might yet be done, but I almost despair I am now given to understand that General Hull’s insidious proclamation has already been productive of considerable effect on the minds of the people. In fact, a general sentiment prevails that with the present force, resistance is unavailing. I shall continue to exert myself to the utmost to overcome every difficulty.”³

A vigorous counter-proclamation in the composition of which he appears to have been assisted by Chief Justice Powell, was immediately prepared and printed for distribution. No time was lost in recalling the men of the Lincoln flank companies who had been allowed to go

¹ Hull, *Defence*, p. 82.

² Hull to Wells, 11th August, 1812, in *Buffalo Gazette*, 15th September, 1812.

³ Brock to Prevost, 20th July, 1812.

home to work in the harvest-fields, and the remainder of those regiments were warned to be in readiness for immediate active service. Two hundred of the First and Second Norfolk and the Oxford and Middlesex regiments, under Major George C. Salmon, were ordered to assemble at Oxford and advance to the Moravian village in the Township of Delaware, where they were to await the arrival of Major Chambers with fifty men of the 41st Regiment from Fort George. Lieut. William Hamilton Merritt, an intelligent and enterprising young officer, was ordered from his station at Chippawa with half a dozen troopers of the Provincial cavalry to precede this movement. The difficulty of equipping and supplying even so small a force as this was considerable, and day by day most discouraging news continued to arrive. On July 26th he learned with dismay and amazement that the Indians of the Grand River, who had hitherto made the strongest professions of loyalty, had decided to remain neutral after the return of several of their chiefs from a visit to Detroit, and with the exception of about fifty, all their warriors had positively refused to join Chambers. Their dubious attitude had an intimidating effect upon the militia in the vicinity, who became naturally reluctant to leave their families at the mercy of several hundred Indians whose intentions they had strong reason to suspect. As Brock remarked, "they become more apprehensive of the internal than the external enemy and would willingly have compromised."¹

Only the paramount necessity of being present at the special session of the Legislature, which he had summoned to meet on the following day, prevented Brock from hastening westward at once instead of proceeding to York for that purpose. The session was opened by him with the following vigorous speech:—

"The urgency of the present crisis is the only consideration which could have induced me to call you together at a time when public (as well as private) duties elsewhere demand your care and attention.

"But, gentlemen, when invaded by an enemy whose avowed object is the entire conquest of this province, the voice of loyalty, as well as of interest, calls aloud to every person in the sphere in which he is placed to defend his country.

"Our militia have heard that voice and obeyed it. They have evinced by the promptitude and loyalty of their conduct that they are worthy of the King whom they serve, and the *Constitution* which they enjoy, and it affords me particular satisfaction that while I address you as legislators, I speak to men who, in the day of danger, will be ready to assist not only with their counsel, but with their arms. We look,

¹ Brock to Prevost, July 26th; Brock to Baynes, July 29th.

gentlemen, to our militia, then, as well as to the regular forces for our protection, but I should be wanting to that important trust committed to my care if I attempted to conceal that experience, that great instructor of mankind, and especially of legislators, has shewn that amendment is necessary in our militia laws to render them efficient.

"It is for you to consider what further improvement they may still require."

He then strongly urged the immediate suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, and concluded with these resolute sentences:

"A few traitors have already joined the enemy; have been suffered to come into the country with impunity and have been harboured and concealed in the interior, yet the general spirit of loyalty which appears to pervade the inhabitants of this province, is such as to authorize a just expectation that their efforts to mislead and deceive will be unavailing. The disaffected, I am convinced, are few. To protect and defend the loyal inhabitants from their machinations is an object worthy of your most serious deliberations.

"We are engaged in an awful and eventful contest. By unanimity in our councils and by vigour in our operations we may teach the enemy this lesson: That a country defended by *Freemen* enthusiastically devoted to the cause of their *King* and country can never be conquered."¹

Lieut.-Colonel Allan Maclean, of Kingston, was elected speaker of the Assembly, and the loyal disposition of the majority of the members could not be doubted for an instant, but several of them were evidently irresolute and averse to accept responsibility for any measure that seemed likely to be unpopular.

"A more decent House has not been elected since the formation of the Province," Brock wrote next day, "but I perceived at once that I should get no good of them. They, like the majority of the magistrates and others in office, evidently mean to remain passive. The repeal of the *Habeas Corpus* will not pass, and if I have recourse to the law martial I am told that the whole armed force will disperse. Never was an officer placed in a more awkward predicament. The militia cannot possibly be governed by the present law — all admit that fact — yet the fear of giving offence will prevent anything effectual from being effected."²

The Hon. James Baby came from Amherstburg to take his seat in the Legislative Council, bringing with him the dispiriting intelligence

¹ York Gazette, August, 1812.

² Brock to Prevost, 28th July.

that the militia about Long Point, upon whom full reliance had been placed, had refused to join Chambers, and giving a dismal account of the prospect in the Western District generally.¹ On learning this, Brock well nigh lost heart.

"My situation is getting each day more critical," he wrote. "I still mean to try and send a force to the relief of Amherstburg, but almost despair of succeeding. The population, although I had no great confidence in the majority, is worse than I expected to find it, and the magistrates, etc., appear quite confounded and decline acting; the consequence is the most improper conduct is tolerated. The officers of militia exert no authority. Everything shows as if a certainty existed of a change taking place soon. But I still hope the arrival of reinforcements may yet avert such a dire calamity. Many in that case would be active in our cause who are dormant."²

A despatch from Captain Roberts announcing the capture of Mackinac, received on the 29th, afforded some encouragement, and the militia assembled at York volunteered for service in any part of the province without hesitation. One hundred picked men were at once ordered to Long Point, where he decided to assemble the force intended for the relief of Amherstburg.³ Robert's success might produce a great change in the affairs of the West, and Brock continued "to speak loud and look big," although he was still far from feeling confident.

"My situation is most critical," he informed Colonel Baynes, "not from anything the enemy can do, but from the disposition of the people — the population, believe me, is essentially bad — a full belief possesses them all that this province must inevitably succumb — this prepossession is fatal to every exertion. Legislators, magistrates, militia officers, all have imbibed the idea and are so sluggish and indifferent in their respective offices that the artful and active scoundrel is allowed to parade the country without interruption and commit all imaginable mischief. They are so alarmed of offending that they rather encourage than repress disorders and other improper acts. I really believe it is with some cause that they dread the vengeance of the democratic party, they are such a set of unrelenting villains."

During the afternoon he embarked on the *Prince Regent* for Niagara to expedite the movement of troops from that frontier and to make arrangements with Lieut.-Colonel Myers for its defence during

¹ Hon. J. Baby to Captain Glegg, 27th July, Can. Arch., C 676, p. 219.

² Brock to Prevost, 28th July, Can. Arch., C 676, p. 217.

³ Brock to Prevost, July 29th, Scadding, Toronto of Old, pp. 78-9. This detachment was officered by Captain Stephen Heward, Lieuts. Richardson, Jarvis and Robinson, Sergeants Knott, Humberstone, Bond and Bridgeport.

his absence in the west. He had already determined to prorogue the Legislature as soon as he returned, being greatly chagrined by the rejection of the bill to authorize him to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act, which had been lost in the House of Assembly by a majority of two votes.¹

On August 3rd he returned to York and presided at an emergency meeting of the Executive Council, which was attended by six members. Brock informed them, with considerable warmth and possibly some exaggeration, "that the Lower House of Assembly, instead of prompt exertions to strengthen his hands for the government of the militia, providing for security from internal treason by partial suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, authorizing a partial exercise of martial law, concurrently with the ordinary course of justice, and placing at his disposal for the defence of the Province the funds not actually applied upon past appropriations, had consumed eight days in carrying a single measure of party — the repeal of the School Bill and passing an act for the public disclosure of treasonable practices before the magistrate should have power to commit without bail," and "that the militia in a perfect state of insubordination had withdrawn from the ranks in active service, had refused to march when legally commanded, to reinforce a detachment of the regular force for the relief of Amherstburg, had insulted their officers, and some not immediately embodied had manifested in many instances a treasonable spirit of neutrality or disaffection.

"That the Indians on the Grand River, tampered with by the disaffected whites, had withdrawn from their volunteer services and declared for a neutrality, which, in respect of them, was equally inadmissible, as with the King's other subjects.

"That in the Western and London several persons had negotiated with the enemy's commander, hailing his arrival and pledging support."

In this situation he feared that little result could be expected from military operations against the invaders, "unless more powerful restraint could be imposed on the militia than the actual law admitted," and he was invested with "power to restrain the general population from treasonable adherence with the enemy or neutrality by summary proceeding and punishment," and requested their advice as to the expediency of immediately proroguing the Legislature and proclaiming martial law. The Council adjourned until next day for deliberation.

In a letter written that afternoon to Colonel Baynes, Brock emphatically declared that the Assembly had refused to do anything that they were asked.

¹ Brock to Prevost, 29th July.

"Everybody considers the fate of the country is settled and is afraid to appear in the least conspicuous to retard it. A petition has already been carried to General Hull, signed by many inhabitants about Westminster, inviting him to advance, with a promise to join him. The ungrateful and infamous conduct of the Indians on the Grand River is still more mortifying."

His determination to prorogue the Legislature was confirmed by the knowledge that a motion had been carried in the Assembly to the effect that it would be lawful for the militia to return to their homes in case they did not receive their pay upon a certain fixed date.¹

On reassembling, the Executive Council reported unanimously that it was expedient upon the prorogation of the Assembly to proclaim and exercise martial law.

On the 5th of August the Assembly was accordingly prorogued, after adopting a most spirited address to the inhabitants of the Province, in which they declared that "the spirit of loyalty had burst forth in all its ancient splendour," and that "the militia in all parts of the Province have volunteered their services with acclamation and displayed a degree of energy worthy of the British name."

This address was printed and widely circulated. In conjunction with Brock's proclamation it had a marked effect upon the well-disposed inhabitants. There was no longer any difficulty in obtaining volunteers for the proposed expedition to relieve Amherstburg. As it was not advisable to weaken the militia force on the Niagara frontier, Captain Samuel Hatt, of the 5th Lincoln Regiment, was authorized to enlist a company of volunteers at Ancaster, in which he quickly succeeded and marched to Port Dover, with two officers and sixty-two non-commissioned officers and privates. Eighty-three volunteers were selected from the 1st and 3rd York Regiments by Captain Stephen Heward, in addition to Captain Peter Robinson's rifle company from the 1st York, consisting of two officers and twenty-two non-commissioned officers and privates. These detachments crossed the lake in open boats to Burlington Bay, and marched across the country to Port Dover, where Lieut.-Colonel Nichol was collecting boats for the transportation of four hundred men.

Lieut. Merritt had already performed effective service with his small party of dragoons. After riding hard for two days he arrived at Oxford on the last day of July, accompanied by only six troopers. Lieut.-Colonel Henry Bostwick had begun to assemble the Oxford Regiment at that place, and it was reported that Watson was at Delaware with about a dozen horsemen. Merritt at once determined to push

¹ Brock to Prevost, 4th August, 1812.

forward as rapidly as possible in the hope of surprising him. When he arrived within a few miles of this place he met Lieut. Tiffany, of the Middlesex militia, who informed him that Watson was at Allen's Mills with a well armed party, and that all the inhabitants would join him. He took possession of a house about six miles distant, stating that his men were a part of Watson's command, and thus inducing the disaffected inhabitants to disclose their feelings. About a dozen of them were made prisoners, and a messenger was sent off to Bostwick to request a reinforcement. When this arrived next day, under Bostwick himself, they moved forward, captured two of Watson's men, and surrounded the mills, but found that he had effected his escape. Returning to Oxford, Merritt learned that Major Chambers had arrived at Burford, where he went to meet him and was at once despatched to Fort George to request a reinforcement of cavalry. On his arrival there he was informed that Brock had just sailed for York, but followed in a row boat and overtook him. Greatly pleased with the young officer's zeal and activity, the General directed him to rejoin Chambers with a cornet and twenty troopers.¹

At first Chambers met with little encouragement in his efforts to assemble the militia. As has been already stated, there were many recent immigrants from the United States in the vicinity of Burford and Oxford who had little attachment to the Government. One of their number, an itinerant "minister of the gospel," relates that many of them were offended at Hull's invitation to take up arms to assist him from freeing them from tyranny," for if they had been under any, "they could at any time have crossed into the United States."² But when a militia officer came to warn them for service most of them promised to turn out, but instead of doing so, concealed themselves in the woods to await the course of events. When ordered to assemble at Oxford, many of the Middlesex militia absolutely refused, alleging their personal dislike of Colonel Talbot, their commanding officer. Timothy Collver, an ensign in the Norfolk militia; John Beamer, a Justice of the Peace, and another man, whose name has not been recorded, rode about among their acquaintances in the vicinity of Long Point advising them to disobey the order. Beamer presided over a public meeting, at which it was decided to refuse to take up arms, but the prompt action of Bostwick and Merritt in marching against the raiders at Delaware, coupled with the arrival of Chamber's detachment at Burford, restored confidence among the loyalists, and within a week about one hundred

¹ Smith, View of Upper Canada.

² Merritt, Journal.

volunteers assembled at Oxford, whither Chambers advanced and was joined by Merritt's dragoons.¹

On the afternoon of August 5th, Brock embarked with his personal staff in a small schooner for Burlington.² Two days later he passed through the Indian Reserve on the Grand River, and held a brief conference with some of the leading chiefs, with the result that Norton promised to join him at Dover in three days' time with sixty warriors. Next day he arrived at that place, where he found nearly five hundred militia already assembled, including the detachments from the Lincoln and York regiments. Most of them were the sons of men who had fought for the unity of the Empire in the American Revolution, and all appeared zealous and resolute. His first step was to direct the arrest of Beamer and other disaffected persons, who were sent away under guard. He reviewed the militia and addressed them in his usual curt and incisive manner, extolling their patriotism, and stating his intention of proceeding at once to Amherstburg whence he should not return until the invaders were driven out of the country. He concluded by declaring that he had unlimited confidence in their loyalty and courage, and asked all those who were willing to follow him to volunteer their services at once. This speech excited great enthusiasm and officers and men volunteered in a body. Few of the boats collected there were serviceable for a long voyage, and the work of refitting them caused a delay of twenty-four hours. One hundred men, including a small detachment of Captain Swayze's Lincoln Artillery, in charge of a six pounder gun, were embarked in a small schooner which set sail at once, and the remainder, about two hundred and fifty in number, followed next day in open row boats, accompanied by twenty Indians, under Mr. Cadotte, in a large canoe. Means of transportation were still wanting for one hundred men, who were directed to march overland, preceded by Merritt's party of dragoons.³

About four o'clock on the afternoon of the 8th Brock got under way with his flotilla of ten boats, many of which were in such a leaky state that they had to be constantly bailed out, entailing both delay and fatigue. At the last moment Chambers suddenly fell ill and had to remain behind, but overtook the expedition two days later in company with Robinson's rifle company, which had also been detained until a boat could be secured to convey them. On the evening of the 9th heavy rain began to fall, which continued with little intermission for

¹ Smith, View; Merritt, Journal.

² Letter from — to —, York, 5th August, 1812.

³ Lt.-Col. Macdonell to Duncan Cameron, 10th August, 1812; Read's Life of Brock, pp. 150-1; Myers to Prevost, 17th August, 1812.

twenty-four hours, thoroughly drenching everybody. This was cheerfully endured and they moved steadily onward until the morning of the 10th, when the lake became so rough that they were forced to put into a creek near Port Talbot until the wind fell sufficiently to permit them to take the lake again. Next day a few hours' hard pulling brought them to the mouth of another small stream in the township of Aldborough, which still bears the name of Brock's Creek, where a second landing was made to rest the men, who were considerably fatigued by their exertions and lack of sleep. Orders were issued for a strict inspection of arms and ammunition as the boats must now pass along a part of the coast which had been visited by scouting parties of the enemy. Re-embarking at midnight, they overtook the schooner next morning at Point aux Pins. At nightfall they again pushed forward, great precautions being taken to keep the boats together and guard against surprise, as no information of any kind had been received from the garrison at Amherstburg since leaving Port Dover. The inspiring example of Brock kept the whole force on the alert and in the best of spirits. Shortly before midnight on the 13th the expedition arrived at Amherstburg and was welcomed by a regular *feu de joie* of musketry from the Indian encampment on Bois Blanc Island. All ranks were much elated to learn that the invaders had already retreated to their own territory and that Colonel Procter had re-occupied Sandwich, where he had begun to construct batteries. Brock did not fail to stimulate his followers to further exertions by well considered words of praise. "In no instance," he declared in a General Order published next day, "have I witnessed greater cheerfulness than was displayed by these troops under the fatigue of a long journey in boats and during extremely bad weather, and it is but justice to this little band to add that their conduct throughout excited my admiration."

Procter was warmly commended for his judicious measures, which had brought about the evacuation of the Province by the invaders, while Colonel Elliott, Major McKee, and other officers of the Indian Department were thanked for their adroit management of the Indians and their gallantry in the field. He expressed surprise at the numerous desertions from the militia, but tactfully added that he was willing to believe that "their conduct proceeded from an anxiety to get in their harvests, and not from any predilection for the principles or government of the United States." He announced his intention of employing "the whole physical force of the country to drive the enemy to such a distance as to ensure its tranquility," and the officers commanding militia corps were consequently instructed to have every man liable to service immediately mustered or treated as a deserter in default of his

appearance. The force in the district was organized into three brigades, the first of which, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel St. George, was composed of a detachment of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the whole of the 1st and 2nd Essex and Kent regiments of militia; the second, under Major Chambers, consisted of fifty men of the 41st and the detachments of the Lincoln, Norfolk, Oxford and York militia which had accompanied Brock from Port Dover, and the third, under Major Joseph Tallon, consisted of two hundred and fifty officers and men of the 41st Regiment. The field artillery, three six pounders and two three pounders, manned by five non-commissioned officers and twenty-four privates of Holcroft's company of the Fourth Battalion of Royal Artillery, was commanded by Lieutenant Felix Troughton. Brock's efforts to re-assemble the militia were so far successful that within twenty-four hours after his arrival at Amherstburg, more than five hundred of the Essex and Kent Regiments mustered there in good spirits and apparently willing to take the field. At the suggestion of Major Thomas Evans, Brigade Major at Fort George, the cast-off uniforms of the 41st Regiment had been sent to Amherstburg for the purpose of clothing the militia, and, being now distributed among them, doubled the apparent number of his regular troops.¹ Two batteries, nearly opposite the fort at Detroit, were being rapidly constructed under the directions of Captain Dixon. During the course of the day Captain John Norton arrived from the Grand River, with fully one hundred and fifty warriors of the Six Nations, and the number of the Western Indians, although constantly fluctuating, was, on the whole, steadily increasing, and they had maintained possession of Brownstown since the recent action without being disturbed.²

A meeting was arranged with the principal chiefs and warriors. Among these Tecumseh naturally took the first place. "A more sagacious and more gallant warrior does not, I believe, exist," Brock wrote soon after. "He was the admiration of every one who conversed with him. From a life of dissipation he has not only become in every respect abstemious, but has also prevailed on all his own nation and many of other tribes to follow his example."

Major Glegg, who was present, gave the following minute description of the Shawnee chief, as seen by him that day:

"Tecumseh's appearance was very prepossessing; his figure light and finely proportioned; his age I imagined to be about five and thirty; in height, five feet nine or ten inches; his complexion, light copper; countenance, oval, with bright hazel eyes, and beaming cheerfulness,

¹ Brock to Evans, 17th August.

² Quebec Mercury.

energy and decision. Three small silver crosses or coronets were suspended from the lower cartilage of his aquiline nose, and a large silver medallion of George the Third, which, I believe, his ancestor had received from Lord Dorchester when Governor-General of Canada, was attached to a mixed-coloured wampum string and hung around his neck. His dress consisted of a plain, neat uniform, tanned deerskin jacket, with long trousers of the same material, the seams of both being covered with neatly cut fringe, and he had on his feet leather moccasins much ornamented with work made from the dyed quills of the porcupine.”¹

Upon his head he sometimes wore a deerskin cap and sometimes a white shawl twisted into the shape of a turban, to which was attached an ostrich feather, a highly prized gift from Mrs. Elliott. His manner was invariably courteous and self-possessed, and he readily accommodated himself to the manners and customs of the white people with whom he became acquainted. On all occasions he resolutely declined to taste spirituous liquors of any kind, explaining that he had learned their degrading effects by personal experience when quite a young man, and had made a vow that henceforth he would drink nothing but water. He showed little respect for the artifices by which the Prophet had gained his ascendancy, and usually spoke of him as “my foolish brother.” He was accompanied by his son, a fair and slender lad of fourteen or fifteen, to whom he seemed warmly attached. For six or seven years past he had been continually on the move engaged in the self-imposed task of forming a general confederacy of all the Indians against the United States. With this object he had repeatedly visited the Creeks and Cherokees of the South, as well as all the tribes of the North-West, including the Osages and Dakotas, whose hunting grounds extended far beyond the Mississippi. Even when he did not succeed in convincing his hearers, his sincerity and passionate eloquence never failed to gain their respect and make a powerful impression on them. Second only to him in influence were the Wvandot chiefs, Roundhead and Walk-in-the-Water. The Prophet had lost so much prestige since the affair at Tippecanoe that he had sunk into comparative insignificance. The entire number of Indians assembled in the vicinity of the council house, including women and children, was not less than a thousand.

Brock declared at once that he had come to drive their enemies from Detroit and restore to the Indians their rightful hunting grounds, extending to the Ohio river, their ancient boundary. Tecumseh replied, with his usual force and eloquence, assuring him of his hearty support,

¹ Cf., also Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, I, p. 55, and *Lucubrations of Humphrey Ravelin*, pp. 340-3.

while the hall resounded with the excited whoops of his fellow-warriors, who sprang wildly to their feet brandishing their weapons in the air. At a private conference with a few of their chiefs, Brock spoke of the difficulty he had found in obtaining satisfactory information respecting the course of the roads and streams on the American side of the Detroit, and Tecumseh rapidly sketched a neat map of the country with the point of his hunting knife upon a roll of birch bark.¹

Much encouraged by the result of this meeting and the alacrity with which the militia were mustering, Brock continued his preparations for a vigorous offensive movement. The *Queen Charlotte* and *General Hunter*, with the whole of the gun-boats, were sent up the river to the vicinity of Spring Wells. These vessels were still very weakly manned, as the whole of the Provincial Marine force at his disposal at this date numbered only five officers and 128 petty officers and seamen, including the impressed *voyageurs*. Brock went forward to Sandwich, where Captain Dixon was still busily engaged in the construction of batteries, and after leaving a slender garrison of militia in the works at Amherstburg, the remainder of the troops were put in motion. During the day Dixon had met with no molestation, although working parties were seen similarly engaged on the opposite bank, and when night fell, his batteries were ready to receive their guns. Before noon of the 15th, these were placed in position, and most of the troops from Amherstburg having arrived, Brock decided to summon the garrison of Detroit to surrender without further delay. After a statement that the force at his disposal fully authorized him to make this demand, he added significantly:—"It is far from my inclination to join in a war of extermination" (borrowing this phrase from Hull's own proclamation), "but you must be aware that the numerous body of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops will be beyond my control the moment the contest commences. You will find me disposed to enter into such conditions as will satisfy a most scrupulous sense of honour."²

A close study of Hull's letter to the Secretary of War of August 4th and other captured correspondence, had already satisfied him that his opponent was in a thoroughly despondent mood and particularly susceptible to the influence of such an argument. It was also apparent that he must in any event be seriously embarrassed by the indiscipline and insubordination of his troops. To add emphasis to the summons, orders were given to tear down a building which masked the batteries at Sandwich. Lieut.-Colonel John Macdonell, acting Attorney-General of the Province, and Major Glegg were selected to deliver it to General

¹ Richardson; Coffin.

² Brock to Hull, August 15.

Hull, and invested with authority to conclude terms with him if he desired to capitulate.¹

Hull had indeed become so much discouraged by the gloomy prospect arising from the interruption of his line of communication with Ohio, that he hinted to some of his officers in a vague and indiscreet way that it might be necessary to make terms with the enemy. On the afternoon of the 12th the commanding officers of the Ohio regiments met secretly, and agreed to despatch a joint letter to Governor Meigs informing him of their loss of confidence in their superior, and requesting him in the most urgent terms to send a large force to their assistance at once, of which, they suggested, that he should take the command in person. The terms of their letter sufficiently indicate the state of panic prevailing in their minds at the time. On the morning of the 14th, Colonel Anderson and another officer of the Michigan militia arrived from the River Raisin by the back road, bearing a letter from Captain Brush to General Hull, announcing the arrival of his convoy at that place and desiring further instructions. They had seen no signs of any hostile force on this road, which they represented as quite practicable for troops, although nearly double the distance of the river road. Encouraged by this information, Hull wrote to Brush, directing him to advance by this route and he would send a strong escort twenty-five or thirty miles along the road to meet him and protect his movement. For this purpose McArthur and Cass were directed to select one hundred and fifty men from each of their regiments and march at once. On the appearance of the British ships of war ascending the river he gave orders for the immediate construction of some new batteries near the water's edge, to prevent them from approaching within effective range of the town and fort of Detroit, and Colonel Findlay was to move at sunset, with a strong detachment from his regiment, to watch the landing place below Spring Wells during the night.

Leaving Detroit late in the afternoon, McArthur and Cass continued their march until near midnight and resumed it at an early hour next day. After having marched, as they supposed, about twenty-four miles without meeting the convoy, a party of dragoons was sent forward to reconnoitre. These men advanced as far as Godefroi's trading house, where they saw a few Indians, who disappeared in the woods. Fearing an ambush, they returned with this report, and McArthur instantly decided to retreat, but had not gone far on his return march when he received a hurried message from Hull recalling him for the defence of Detroit, which, he stated, had been summoned to surrender that morning.

¹ Lucas Journal, p. 406; Cass to Secretary of War, September 10th, 1812; Hull Defence, pp. 84-5; Brock to Hull, August 15th, 1812.

Brock's envoys could scarcely have arrived at a more opportune moment for the success of their mission. They were at once received by General Hull, but were purposely detained on various pretexts, from ten o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon, to gain time for further defensive preparations and the recall of McArthur's column. They were perceptibly annoyed at this unexpected delay and showed their anxiety to get away. At length Hull gave them a written reply, firmly rejecting the summons, but at the same time rather weakly apologizing for the destruction of Gowie's house which, he asserted, had been set on fire contrary to his orders, and making a similar explanation respecting the use of the flag of truce at the first skirmish near the Canard bridge.¹

He had restrained his gunners from firing upon the British batteries at Sandwich when they were unmasked, saying, that he did not wish to waste his ammunition, and refused to consider a proposal to attack them by crossing the river at night.

During the prolonged absence of the flag of truce, Brock had convened a meeting of his principal officers to whom he stated his intention of transferring the main body of his force to the other side of the river and investing the American position. Colonel Procter was frankly opposed to this, and the only officer who ventured to support the proposal was Lieut.-Colonel Nichol, the Quartermaster-General of militia, who was not a professional soldier. Finally, Brock put an end to the discussion by saying abruptly:—"Gentlemen, I have made up my mind, and instead of any further advice, I entreat you to give me your cordial support." He had served under Nelson at Copenhagen, and quoted the great seaman's example on that occasion to justify his action. Writing, some weeks later, he declared that he had actually "proceeded upon a cool calculation of the *pours et contres*. Some one had remarked that 'No step could be more desperate,' but his answer was that 'the state of Upper Canada admitted of nothing but desperate remedies.'" It seldom happens, indeed, that a commander is favoured with such complete and absolutely reliable information from the enemy's camp as he possessed in the captured correspondence. From the private letters of officers and men he had ascertained, to use his words, that "confidence in the General was gone, and evident despondency prevailed throughout."² The psychological moment for making the attack had undoubtedly arrived. Hull's own letters showed that he had been on the brink of despair several days before and his position since had steadily grown worse. Brock's armed vessels and gun boats gave him entire command of the river below the town. Their guns could cover

¹ Forbes, Trial; Hull to Brock, August 15th, 1812.

² Brock to his brother, September 3rd.

his landing, co-operate in his movement, and if need be, protect his retreat. The Indians could be relied upon to cut off all communication between the town and the adjacent country. No return of their actual number is available, but it probably exceeded six hundred warriors, few of whom, however, were efficiently armed or equipped. Part of them were already on the American side of the river and eager to advance upon Detroit.

Accordingly, about four o'clock in the afternoon, within a few minutes after Hull's reply was received, orders were given for the resumption of hostilities. The *Queen Charlotte* and *Hunter* rounded the bend in the river below Sandwich and anchored in mid-channel. The batteries, which had been armed with an eighteen pounder, two twelve pounders, and two five and a half inch mortars, opened fire. In a few minutes they were briskly answered from the American detached works, and the cannonade was maintained until eleven o'clock at night with trifling effect. Two of the last shells fired from the British guns fell within the fort, and one man was wounded by their explosion.¹

Forty or fifty of the inhabitants, headed by Watson and Andrew Westbrook, had, indeed, joined the enemy and withdrawn to Detroit, but most of these men were recent immigrant from the United States. The local regiments had mustered in unexpected strength, increasing Brock's available and naval force to 1,360 of all ranks and arms.²

	Officers'	N.C.O.	Privates
General and Staff Officers.....	9	..	..
Field Train Department.....	1	1	..
Commissariat.....	1	2	..
Militia Staff Officers.....	4	..	..
Detachment 4 Bn. Rl. Artillery.....	1	5	24
41st Regt. of Foot.....	13	26	263
Royal Newfoundland Fencibles.....	4	8	41
Provincial Marine Department.....	5	9	119
Militia Force 1st & 3rd Reg. York Militia.....	4	6	77
5th Lincoln & 2nd York.....	3	3	59
1st Regt. York Militia.....	2	3	19
2nd. Regt. Norfolk Militia.....	6	3	59
1st Middlesex (attached to Norfolk).....	1	..	..
Oxford Militia.....	..	2	11
1st. Regt. Essex Militia.....	22	32	258
2nd Regt. Essex Militia.....	23	11	131
1st Regt. Kent Militia.....	9	8	46
Troop of Essex Militia Cavalry.....	1	1	4
Indian Department.....	5	11	..
49th Regiment.....	..	..	1
Officers (Regiments not mentioned).....	3	..	..
Total.....	117	131	1112

¹ Claypool's Journal, quoted in Blanchard's Discovery of the Northwest, I, p. 385; Lucas, pp. 410-11; Richardson, p. 51.

² Prize Pay List of those entitled to share in the property captured from the enemy at Port Detroit on the 16th August 1812. Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

The military value of the militia, it is true, had not yet been ascertained.

Lieut.-Colonel St. George was directed to march his brigade soon after dark to McKee's Point and quarter them in houses there, and the remainder of the regulars and militia were ordered to be in readiness to embark promptly at that place at three o'clock next morning. Elliott was instructed to bring forward the Indians during the night to the River Rouge, and take up a position to attack the enemy in flank and rear in case they attempted to oppose the landing. As soon as he accomplished this the passage of the river would begin.¹

Hull had, in fact, anticipated an attempt would be made to land near Spring Wells, and despatched Captain Joseph Snelling, with fifty men of the 4th United States Infantry and a light field gun, after dark to occupy the high bluff at that place, which commanded a wide view of the river below, but advised him to return before daybreak to avoid the fire of the British vessels. His Adjutant-General and Quarter-master-General were likewise directed to examine the ground and select a position for a field work to be armed with artillery later on. During the night Snelling's sentries reported hearing the sound of oars on the river, but he returned to Detroit before daylight without having noticed anything of importance.

During the afternoon and evening, three hundred wild western warriors, Ottawas, Sacs, Saukteux, and Winnebagoes came up from Amherstburg in their canoes. They had painted their faces and all exposed portions of their bodies with fantastic devices in blue and vermilion, and spent the greater part of the night before in dancing the war-dance and practising their customary incantations on the eve of battle. They then crossed the river swiftly and silently, under the supervision of Major McKee, whose influence over them was remarkable. The moon had entered its first quarter and favoured this movement in the early part of the night.

Shortly after midnight the whole of the troops were roused, and Brock made a hasty inspection of regulars and militia as soon as they were formed up. The passage of the river began shortly after dawn. Brock himself crossed in one of the first boats, standing proudly erect to encourage his men. The batteries at Sandwich opened fire as soon as it was light enough to distinguish objects on the opposite side, with little more result than on the previous evening for several hours, as the town was practically deserted within range. It was very languidly returned at long intervals. By this means the attention of the garrison

¹ D. G. O., August 15th.

was occupied until nearly seven o'clock, when a column of troops in scarlet was seen advancing upon the river road. This was apparently the first intimation they had of the landing of the British.

When the whole of his men were disembarked, Brock ordered the reports to be collected, and was informed, to his amazement, that he had only five hundred and fifty of all arms. A strong detachment had been detailed to support the gunners of the Provincial Navy who were working the guns in the batteries, but this number seemed so incredibly small that he directed the report to be verified. It was then ascertained that there were actually 750 officers and men, including some boatmen who were not under arms.¹ Brock's despatch states the number at 730, distributed as follows:—Royal Artillery, 30, with five light field guns; 41st Regiment, 250; Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 50; militia, 400. Possibly this return may have included rank and file only, as a contemporary account printed in the *Montreal Gazette* increased the number to 830, besides twenty seamen to manage the *batteaux*, and the detachment of militia stationed at the batteries.²

The Indians, who had occupied a position about a mile inland, were thrown forward through the woods to gain the rear of the town. From some prisoners taken by them in this movement, it was learned that a small column of troops had been detached to the River Raisin two days before, which was now supposed to be returning, as horsemen had been seen on the back road about three miles distant. Hitherto Brock had intended to take up some strong position near the town in the hope of inducing Hull to come out and attack him, but finding that the garrison of the place had been unexpectedly weakened, he determined to advance at once upon the fort and intercept the return of this column.³ Lieut. Bullock, with his picked detachment of sixty men of the 41st, led the way along the road which followed the bank of the river so closely as to be commanded by the guns of the vessels until within a few hundred yards of the town, where it was intersected by a deep ravine. Two twenty-four pounders had been placed in position at the town gate to enfilade the road as it ascended the opposite slope. Their gunners could be seen standing beside them with matches burn-

¹ Richardson, p. 52.

² Distributed as follows:—Royal Artillery, 30; 41st, 290; Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 45; militia, 465. Lomax's History of the 41st Regiment gives the following return of the strength of the detachment of that corps commanded by Captain Muir:—Three captains, nine subalterns, one assistant surgeon, thirteen sergeants, thirteen corporals, 240 privates. Captain Tallon was in command of the brigade.

³ Brock to Prevost, August 17th.

ing. The artillery men with the field guns came next and were followed by the remainder of the infantry in column of sections, marching at double the ordinary distance between sections to make their number appear greater. Every spare uniform had been utilized, and by this means three hundred and fifty of the militia were clad in red coats, giving them the appearance of regular soldiers. Before the head of the column came within range of the American guns, it wheeled to the left and took up a position in a field and orchard, where it was sheltered from observation by a ridge while forming for the assault, and Brock rode forward in person to reconnoitre the works. Captain Peter Robinson's rifle company was thrown out to the left to open communication with the Indians who had occupied the woods in rear of the fort, and made willing prisoners of a dozen men of the Michigan militia who were stationed as an out-picket in that quarter. The whole body of warriors was then marched in single file three times in succession across an open space in full view of the garrison to give an exaggerated idea of their numbers, which had the desired effect, as they were counted and reported to General Hull to exceed fifteen hundred.

The town of Detroit consisted of about three hundred houses, inhabited by twelve hundred persons, of whom three-fourths were of French extraction. It had already seen many vicissitudes of fortune. Within half a century the allegiance of the inhabitants had been transferred by treaty three times. The Indians had twice besieged the place, and only a few years before every building except a single house had been destroyed by fire.¹ It now contained several substantial stone and brick buildings, and nearly every dwelling had a small garden or orchard attached. The streets crossed each other at right angles, and the entire town-plot was enclosed on three sides by a stout stockade of wooden pickets fourteen feet high, and loopholed for musketry. Massive gates on each face gave admission to this enclosure, while the water front was protected by several new batteries. At the northeast angle of the town, on the highest ground within a circumference of three miles, stood the fort, covering about three acres of ground. It was composed of four small bastions connected by curtains, each face being about one hundred yards in length. Constructed during the British occupation in 1778-9, it had been named Fort Lernoult, in honour of the officer in command at the time, but had of late generally been known as Fort Detroit. Extensive repairs, which had been begun on February 7th, 1812, had placed it in an excellent state of defence. The

¹ Jamieson, *Winter Studies*; Brown, *View of War in N. W.*; Darby *Travels*; Gourlay, *Upper Canada*, I, p. 45; S. Williams' *Two Campaigns in 1812*.

crest of the parapet rose eleven feet above the *terre pleine* and was twelve feet thick. It was surrounded by a dry ditch six feet deep and twelve feet wide, in the centre of which was planted a row of cedar pickets eleven or twelve feet high, while the exterior slope of the parapet was fraised with a similar row. A plan of the work, dated February, 1812, filed in the Colonial Office, shows that at that time sixteen guns were mounted, of which one was a ten inch howitzer, nine were twenty-four pounders, four were field pieces mounted *en barbette* at the salient angles, and two were six pounders on field carriages. This number had been since increased to twenty-four, of which eleven, three twenty-four pounders, three brass six pounders, two four pounders, one three pounder, one $8\frac{1}{2}$, and one $5\frac{1}{2}$ mortar, were mounted on field carriages, probably for the contemplated attack upon Amherstburg, besides several wall pieces and swivels of small calibre. A detached blockhouse at the opposite angle of the stockade was armed with three six inch howitzers, flanking the ditches in each direction.¹

The effective strength of the garrison is difficult to ascertain. Hull, in his official letter, asserted that it did not exceed eight hundred, but this seems almost incredible. His actual losses in action had certainly not been great, nor had many become ineffective for garrison duty from disease. Allowing three hundred for losses from all causes during the campaign, four hundred of all ranks detached with McArthur, and two hundred Michigan militia stationed at the River Raisin, he must still have had at least sixteen hundred men available for the defence of his works. A very accurate account, published in the *Montreal Gazette* soon after, states the number of troops occupying the town and fort of Detroit at 1,826 of all ranks.²

¹ Can. Arch. 2,315, p. 175.

² 1st United States Infantry, Effectives.....	50
4th United States Infantry, Effectives.....	300
Artillery	56
Detachments of other corps	20
Ohio Volunteers	1,000
Michigan militia	400
	<hr/> 1,826

Another estimate, printed in the *National Advocate*, of New York, May 28th, 1814, is as follows:—

Regulars in the forts and batteries actually surrendered—	
Fourth Regiment Infantry, present for duty.....	260
1st Regiment Infantry, under Captain Whistler, 1st Regiment	
Artillery, Captain Dyson	80
Findlay's Regiment with Cass's and McArthur's men left with	
Findlay	700
Michigan Legion and militia of the country estimated at.....	300
	<hr/> 1,340
With Colonel's Cass and McArthur, two miles of Brock's rear.	700
	<hr/> 2,040

This probably included a number of sick men, and as the event proved, little reliance could be placed upon a part of the Michigan militia. Deducting the whole of these, upwards of twelve hundred of all ranks remain. Most of General Hull's official returns were destroyed in the brig *Detroit*, near Fort Erie, on the 9th of October, 1812, and the evidence on this point given at his trial was conjectural and contradictory.

During the night the Ohio volunteers and Michigan militia had been quartered in the town, but when the cannonade recommenced, most of them were withdrawn into the fort for protection, crowding it to its utmost capacity. On the approach of the British the Ohio volunteers marched out in three columns and formed in line behind the palisades, in which they began to enlarge the loopholes with their tomahawks. Major Denny, with part of McArthur's regiment (1st Ohio) was stationed on the right, Findlay occupied the centre, and Captain Sanderson, with a detachment of Cass's regiment and Captain Kemper's company of armed waggoners, the left of the line. According to the sworn statements of their officers these troops numbered between eight and nine hundred.¹ The Michigan militia were ordered to assist in the defence of the town, while the regular infantry garrisoned the fort and detached batteries and assisted the artillerymen in working the guns, for which service a number had been specially trained. Nearly the whole of the population of the adjacent country had sought refuge within the stockade with their cattle and horses, whose presence created serious disorder and obstructed the movements of troops.

Observing some of the Ohio Volunteers loitering idly in the streets, Captain Hull, the General's son and aide-de-camp, peremptorily ordered them to join their corps, and receiving an insolent reply, he drew his sword and drove them before him. This was followed by a quarrel with their commander in his father's presence, during which this hot-headed young man challenged that officer to fight a duel, thereby greatly increasing the General's agitation at this critical moment.²

The British mortars at Sandwich began to throw shrapnel shells, creating such alarm that Findlay's regiment, which was most exposed, was soon withdrawn into the fort, whither many non-combatants also fled for refuge. One of these shells exploding in an open space near the officers quarters instantly killed Lieut. Hanks (lately commandant at Mackinac), Ensign Sibley and Surgeon Reynolds, and severely wounded Surgeon Blood. Another killed two private soldiers inside

¹ Forbes, Trial.

² Letter of Robert Wallace in Appendix to Clark's Life of Hull, pp. 453-61.

the fort, and a third, two more outside its walls. These casualties completed the demoralization of the non-combatants.

About the same time it was reported that an out-picket of the 1st Michigan militia, under Lieut. Godefroi, posted in rear of the town, had surrendered without firing a shot, and Colonel Brush, commanding that regiment, remarked excitedly to General Hull with an oath that he believed his men would run away to a man.¹ Again Hull sought to gain time. At ten o'clock his batteries ceased firing, and he instructed his son to display a white flag. For this purpose a large towel was produced by him, which a senior officer rejected as being too dirty. A sheet or table cloth was next obtained, which was objected to as being so large that before it could be hoisted the United States ensign must be lowered. Finally, this was displayed upon the south-western bastion, and Captain Hull crossed the river at the same time with a flag of truce to request a cessation of hostilities for three days. He quickly returned, accompanied by Lieut. Edward Dewar, of the Quartermaster-General's Department, who came to enquire why a flag had been sent to Sandwich when General Brock was on the American side of the river. Captain Snelling was then despatched with a letter to General Brock, whom he found quietly reconnoitering the works without an escort, about two hundred yards in advance of his troops, who were lying down under cover. The proposal could scarcely have arrived at a more opportune moment, as the Indians had already reported the appearance of McArthur's column about two miles in rear of their position. Brock informed Snelling with great emphasis that he would certainly move to the assault if terms of surrender were not agreed upon within three hours, and delegated Glegg and Macdonell to return with him and receive General Hull's answer. When this message was delivered, Hull seemed greatly agitated and his voice faltered. He had been chewing tobacco, and his lips, chin, and neckcloth were stained with the juice. By this time a number of Indians had appeared in the fields near the fort, where they employed themselves catching horses, and the woods rang with their yells in all directions.² McArthur's return was evidently cut off and his force might easily be surrounded and destroyed. Menaced on all sides by a confident and imperious enemy, whom he believed to be already superior in numbers and daily increasing, Hull had neither provisions nor ammunition to stand a prolonged siege. None of his troops except the regulars had as yet behaved in a manner to inspire confidence, while many of the volunteer officers had openly

¹ Hull, *Defence*, p. 163; Forbes, *Trial*, Evidence of Lt.-Col. Miller.

² Forbes, *Trial*.

flouted his authority. He shrank from exposing a helpless throng of non-combatants, among whom was his own daughter and her children, to the horrors of an assault in which the terms of his own unlucky proclamation could be cited to justify a "war of extermination" and "an indiscriminate scene of desolation." Lieutenant-Colonel Miller, the only officer of rank who continued to treat him with courtesy, was almost helpless with the ague and unable to command. Hull accordingly determined to surrender on the best terms possible, and named Lieut.-Colonel Miller and Colonel Brush as his representatives. There could have been little discussion, as within half an hour articles of capitulation were signed, by which Fort Detroit, with all public stores, arms, and documents was surrendered, and all troops of every description under General Hull's command became prisoners of war. At his particular request, Colonel McArthur's force and that of Captain Brush were included on the condition that the latter should be permitted to return to their homes on parole. Protection was guaranteed to the persons and property of the inhabitants of Michigan. It was further agreed that the garrison should march out with the honours of war at noon. These terms were ratified at once, and two supplementary articles were added, by the first of which the Ohio Volunteers were permitted to return home on parole, and by the second the Michigan militia and volunteers, under the command of Major Witherell (the Michigan Legion), were placed on the same footing.

No time was lost in taking possession of the town, but before the garrison was allowed to march out, the precaution was taken to place field-guns to command all the approaches to the fort, as there were signs of disorder and insubordination among the American volunteers. Major Witherell broke his sword, several soldiers smashed their muskets, and an Ohio officer actually attempted to stab Lieut.-Colonel Macdonell with his hunting knife as he was passing their lines.¹ The British column was headed by the detachment of the 41st, followed in succession by the uniformed militia, those not in uniform, a detachment of *voyageurs*, wearing red handkerchiefs tied about their heads, and finally, a large body of Indians, led by their white officers and interpreters, most of whom were dressed and painted like the warriors under their command. When the whole force was drawn up on the esplanade, the United States regulars marched out and stacked their arms and were followed, after some delay, by the Ohio and Michigan militia, many of whom looked very fierce and angry.

The garrison flag was hauled down, and a small British ensign which a seaman of the Provincial Navy had brought with him wrapped

¹ Quebec Mercury, 1812.

about his waist as a sash, was hoisted in its place. While the advanced party commanded by Lieut. Bullock was searching the barracks for stragglers, an American soldier was discovered in the act of secreting or preparing to destroy the colours of the 4th United States Infantry, which were taken from him, and with the garrison flag now hang as trophies on the walls of the Royal Hospital at Chelsea.¹

McArthur's command had returned within a couple of miles of the fort when the cannonade suddenly ceased, and he halted until informed by an inhabitant that the place had surrendered, when he withdrew as rapidly as possible to the bridge over the River Rouge, a distance of three or four miles, where he was overtaken by some fugitives from the town who confirmed this information. Captain Mansfield was then sent back to Detroit with a flag of truce, and returned with a letter from General Hull stating that his troops were included in the capitulation. Neither McArthur or Cass, who subsequently criticized Hull so bitterly, seemed to have offered the slightest remonstrance nor made the least effort to escape. Before night this column marched into Detroit and surrendered. No accurate return of the prisoners has become available. In his official letter, Brock stated that they could not be estimated at less than 2,500, and when Brush's command, the Michigan Legion, and two regiments of Michigan militia are included, they must have considerably exceeded that number. The first hasty return of captured ordnance showed a total of thirty-three pieces of cannon, but the corrected report increased the number to thirty-nine carriage guns, besides fifteen wall pieces, 2,900 stands of muskets and rifles, and a large quantity of military stores.² The United States brig *Adams* pierced for sixteen guns, lying at the wharf, also became

¹ Richardson, pp. 57-9; Narrative of Shadrach Byfield.

² Return of ordnance taken at Detroit, enclosed in Sir George Prevost's despatch to Lord Bathurst, dated 20th March 1813: *Brass guns*—three six pounders, two four pounders, one 8 inch howitzer, one 5½ inch howitzer, three 2 9-10 inch howitzers—total eleven guns. *Iron guns*—nine twenty-four pounders, nine twelve pounders, five nine pounders, four six pounders, one 3 9-10 inch howitzer—total, 28 guns. Grand total, 39 guns. The 5½ inch howitzer is an English piece taken at Saratoga. The three pounder is also English, taken at Yorktown. Pikes, 100; ammunition waggons, 2; baggage waggons, 4; wall pieces, 15; flags, one English, two American; muskets, serviceable, 2,009; repairable, 285; unserviceable, 206; rifles, serviceable, 349; repairable, 25; unserviceable, 26. Four of the captured guns bearing the following inscriptions, "La Brutale, Strasburg, 1760"; "Sauvage, Strasburg, 1760"; W. Bowen fecit. 1755, Surrendered by the Convention of Saratoga, Oct. 17, 1777"; "Gilpin fecit. Taken from the Germans at Bennington, August 16, 1777, "were removed to Quebec as trophies."

a prize, and was added to the Provincial Navy as the *Detroit*. Three floating batteries, two of which had been completed, two or three merchant schooners and a number of *batteaux* were likewise taken. The baggage train which had accompanied the American army from Ohio, consisting of more than one hundred waggons and many pack-horses with the military chest containing about six thousand dollars in money and a hundred packs of valuable furs belonging to the government, shared the same fate. The property which came into the possession of the prize agents was valued at two hundred thousand dollars.¹

After the prisoners had been marched off, Brock addressed his troops in his usual curt, inspiring manner, telling them that the events of the day would put a feather in their cap as long as they lived. In his General Order he praised all ranks for their steadiness and discipline, mentioning nearly every officer of rank by name, and assuring the militia that their services had been duly appreciated and would never be forgotten.² A proclamation was issued the same afternoon, continuing in force all existing laws in the territory of Michigan, and assuring the inhabitants of protection in the exercise of their religion. The former Chief Justice, Augustus Woodward, was appointed Civil Secretary.

The embarkation of the Ohio Volunteers for Cleveland in the captured vessels began next day. On the 18th Brock himself sailed for Fort Erie in the schooner *Chippewa*.

Those residents of Canada who had joined the invaders in arms naturally dreaded the punishment they so richly deserved, and one of them is said to have blown out his brains in the streets of Detroit when informed of the capitulation. Several escaped from the town and made their way to the River Raisin, whither they brought the first news of the surrender. Among these were Simon Z. Watson, who was rewarded by the United States Government with a commission as topographical engineer for the Ninth Military District, and Andrew Westbrook, who subsequently became an active partisan in its service. A few of those who remained were shortly afterwards indicted for treason and sedition, but do not appear to have been prosecuted.³

On July 18th Governor Meigs at Chillicothe had received Hull's letter of the 11th, requesting him to keep open the line of communication with his state militia or his army must perish for want of pro-

¹ Nichol to Brock, September 6th, 1812.

² September 11th and 12th, 1812.

³ Allan McDougall, Antoine Lafitte, Antoine Meloche and Isaac Willett, Hull attempted to obtain conditions for these men, but Lieut.-Col. Macdonald declared that "it was totally inadmissible."—Forbes, Trial.

visions, and on the same day a letter from Piatt, the contractor for supplying provisions at Urbana, informing him that a brigade of pack-horses would be ready to leave that place as soon as he could furnish sufficient escort. Within forty-eight hours a company of sixty-nine volunteers was enrolled and equipped under command of Captain Henry Brush, a young lawyer, practising in Chillicothe. On the 25th Brush, with his company and a sergeant's party of the 4th United States Infantry, began his march from Urbana in charge of three hundred beef cattle and one hundred pack-horses each carrying two hundred weight of flour. Orders had been sent on to Sandusky and Cleveland directing the militia companies stationed at those places to join Brush at the Miami Rapids, where he arrived on August 2nd. Five days later two companies from Sandusky arrived, and on the 9th the whole force in charge of the convoy reached the River Raisin, where Lacroix's company of the Michigan Legion and the greater part of the Second Regiment of Michigan militia were assembled. Next day a small party of rangers arrived from Manary's blockhouse. Brush had then almost two hundred men under his command, whom he proceeded to organize into a battalion.¹ The most alarming rumours concerning the precarious situation of Hull's army continued to reach him, as all communication with Detroit had been cut off for several days. Five messengers had been sent off, and none had since been heard from. An American prisoner, who had escaped from Amherstburg, come in and reported that the mail had been taken and brought into that place, where the officers had "much sport" examining it. All hope of advancing further until instructions could be received from Detroit was accordingly abandoned, and the whole force was set at work entrenching their position. On August 17th, Captain Matthew Elliott, of the Indian Department, arrived from Amherstburg with an escort of only three men, bearing a copy of the articles of capitulation, with letters to Brush from Hull and McArthur, and an order from Brock to march on at once to Detroit. Elliott, with his party, was placed under arrest. In the afternoon a number of fugitives arrived from Detroit, who confirmed his report of the surrender, and a council of war decided to disregard the terms and retreat

¹ Brush's Company	69
Rowland's Company	47
Campbell's Company	35
4th United States Infantry, Sergt Story.....	21
Rangers, Lieut. Couch	22

to Ohio, leaving behind the cattle and stores. Elliott was accordingly released, and twenty-six men who were either too sick or unwilling to face the hardships of the return march, were placed in his charge and accompanied him as prisoners to Amherstburg. Leaving their encampment at midnight, the remainder made a forced march of more than thirty miles without halting. At the rapids of the Miami they separated into several parties and quietly returned to their respective homes. Some months later they were duly recognized by their government as prisoners of war under parole until exchanged.¹

Upon Elliott's return to Amherstburg, Captain Chambers, with a detachment of the 41st Regiment, was embarked in three small gun boats and a considerable force of Indians, under Colonel Elliott and Major McKee, began its march by land toward the River Raisin. On their arrival at that place they found the blockhouse deserted by its garrison, and took possession of the cattle and stores abandoned by Brush. Two days later Chambers proceeded with the gun boats to Miami River, which he ascended as far as the rapids. The blockhouse at that place, sometimes known as Fort Miami, had been recently evacuated and set on fire. A small depot of provisions was taken, and the inhabitants who seemed to be much in fear of the Indians, were advised to remove at once to some place of greater security, which they readily agreed to do, most of them going to Cleveland, which was the nearest settlement of any importance in Ohio.²

The American frontier was thus thrown back a long way towards the Ohio River, which the Indians sought to re-establish as their boundary. Two forts at Upper and Lower Sandusky, Fort McArthur on the Scioto, Fort Wayne on the Great Miami, Fort Harrison (Terre Haute) on the Wabash, and Fort Madison, near Des Moines, on the Mississippi, became the most advanced posts still held by the United States, as Fort Dearborn at Chicago had already been evacuated by General Hull's instructions, and its garrison destroyed or captured in the attempt to retire to Fort Wayne. The grand council of the Indians of Ohio and Indiana, convened by Governor Meigs at Piqua, was meagrely attended and nothing of any consequence was accomplished. The surrender of Detroit became the signal for a general rising of all the Indians of Illinois and Indiana, and early in September, Forts Wayne, Madison and Harrison were all closely invested by these fierce but wretchedly armed and undisciplined bands.³ Brock's audacious coun-

¹ S. Williams, *Two Campaigns in 1812*, in *Historical Collections of Ohio*; Major E. Reynolds to —, January 17th, 1815.

² *Federal Republican*, October 7th, 1812; Letter from Joseph Meacham.

³ Hildreth *History of the United States*, VI, p. 342.

terstroke had been attended with such entire success that he was able to disband at once two-thirds of the local militia and return the entire force withdrawn from the Niagara frontier to meet the impending attack in that quarter. On the very day that Detroit surrendered, Henry Clay, the acknowledged leader of the war party in Congress, addressed a second army of volunteers at Georgetown, Kentucky, predicting the fall of Malden and a speedy conquest of Upper Canada by General Hull.